TRIBEBOOK:

SILVER FANGS™

Heavy Lies the Crown

Mari Cabrah stared at the gaily-dressed clown looming before her, his handful of balloons bobbing above him, and clenched her fists, raising them to strike.

"Mari, no!" Evan Heals-the-Past hissed. "It's his job. He has to do that sort of stuff."

"Hee-yuk!" the clown cried, apparently oblivious to his near encounter with death. "Have a buwoon, pwetty waydy!" He handed Mari a helium-filled balloon labeled "Coney Island" and capered down the boardwalk towards a family with kids.

Mari disdainfully let go of the balloon, and King Albrecht, ruler of the North American Silver Fang tribe, watched it float upwards into the sunny sky, heading over the beach and out to sea.

"Geez, Mari, least you coulda' done is ask the kid if he wanted it," he said, smirking.

She shot Albrecht one of her *I-don't-have-time-for-this-nonsense* looks. Six feet tall in her human form, every ounce of it muscle, her look would have spooked any number of men, but Albrecht knew most of it was bluster — at least when it was directed at a packmate.

"Why in the world are we meeting you at Coney Island?" she said, looking disdainfully around at the crowded boardwalk. "Is *this* where your Silver Fang emissaries from Russia come when they reach America? Don't they have cheap amusement parks in Siberia?"

"Now that you mention it, I bet they don't," Albrecht said with a shrug. "But that's not why we're here. Nearby Brighton Beach is also known as Little Odessa, 'cause it's crammed full of Russian immigrants. There's supposedly a number of Kinfolk to House Crescent Moon among them. That's who we're meeting; they'll take us to the emissaries."

"Supposedly?" Evan said. The young man shielded his eyes from the sun's glare as he looked around the crowded boardwalk. He fit into the scene better than his packmates; his jeans, T-shirt ("All My Heroes Have Shot Cowboys") and sneakers were the perfect camouflage.

"Hell, it's what they tell me," Albrecht said. "Arkady was our only Crescent Moon, and he wasn't exactly forthcoming about his Kin." He wore a black t-shirt, black jeans and black steel-toed boots. He had exchanged his ornate eye-patch for a simple black one — pirate style, as he called it. His white hair, braided into a long tail, stretched down his back to his belt. A thin band of featureless silver encircled his head.

"But the communiqué said to meet here?" Evan said.

"Yeah, at Tatiana Café. Our contacts will take us to the real meeting spot from there."

"Why are they so cloak-and-dagger?" Mari said, frowning. She wore jogging pants, a tight white T-shirt, and sunglasses. "I still don't see why you couldn't receive them in court, with your full entourage."

"One, they're being cagey because I think they're Russian Mafia. The Kin, that is, not the emissaries. Two, this is a delicate situation. Relations between my house and theirs haven't been good since way before the Cold War started. The fall of the Berlin Wall may have ended that crap among humans, but the Shadow Curtain only came down a few years ago. There's still a lot of distrust between us." He stopped and looked over at a nearby game booth. "Hold on a sec."

Albrecht walked over to the carnival booth, a target game with BB guns and moving beer bottles. He handed a wrinkled five-dollar bill to the attendant and picked up a gun. He aimed it steadily at the row of moving bottles and pulled the trigger. The pellet hit the lead bottle squarely, but it failed to break. "Hey, this thing's not pumped up enough."

"Tough break, pops," the attendant said. "Don't worry; you still got four more shots for your money."

"I need *five* shots for that stuffed bear," Albrecht growled. It was a deep, throaty growl, not the kind that comes out of a human throat.

The attendant turned white. "Sure… sure, pal. Go ahead, take five shots. Take as many as you like."

"How 'bout I just take the bear? You and I both know I'd hit every one of those bottles."

"Yeah, sure," the attendant said, grabbing the stuffed bear Albrecht had pointed at. It was huge, as big as an 8-year old child. He cautiously handed it to Albrecht, who put down his gun and smiled.

"Thanks," Albrecht said, and walked back to join his packmates. Evan frowned at him but Mari didn't seem to care what had happened. "Where was I? Oh, yeah, house relations. The Grand Moot coming up in the Urals is being looked on as a major chance for my tribe to reunite, to put old feuds behind us and forge new alliances against our enemies. Of course, it's also a chance for me and Queen Tamara Tvarivich to vie for dominance over all the tribe."

"What else is new?" Mari said. "So, they're wary of you. But why don't they just come to court like good little Silver Fangs should? And why do you put up with them not doing that?"

"Because I actually want to improve relations with them, not force a dominance issue. Not yet, anyway. That's between me and Tvarivich. Until then, I'll meet her fellow countrymen half way. Besides, I need them as much as they need me."

"I don't get it," Evan said. "What do you need from them, besides their cooperation?"

"Information. This Grand Moot is a big affair, but it's happening *over there*, in *their* territory. They've got customs and traditions stretching way, way back, and I don't know jack about any of them. If I'm going to win their trust and admiration — not to mention their fealty — I've got to be on my best behavior. That's where these two emissaries come in."

They both looked at him, nodding him on for more information. He placed the stuffed bear on the boardwalk and leaned against a railing fronting the beach. "It's like this: These guys aren't septmates of Tvarivich. They're not from the Sept of the Crescent Moon; they're from the Firebird Sept." He seemed to be waiting for a reaction from them, but they just stared blankly at him. "*Arkady's* sept."

"*What?!*" Mari said. "Are you nuts? They'll try to kill you before they teach you a lick of Silver Fang tradition!"

"Remember, Mari: Arkady's dead. They've got a new leader now. But this guy doesn't have the pull Arkady did. They risk becoming puppets to Tvarivich, who pushes all the buttons over there in Russia. I think they're looking for a high-ranking ally to balance her power."

Evan smiled. "I'm surprised you'd be so forward-thinking, Albrecht. You're really learning this whole leadership game."

"Hey, thanks. I thought it up all by myself, too. That's why I haven't told anyone yet. The rest of my court would have a fit — sort of like Mari did. I thought it best to just call you guys in, to keep the pomp and circumstance low key until we've cemented an agreement here."

"Okay," Mari said, "I get it. But what the hell is up with that goddamn stuffed bear?"

"Oh, this?" Albrecht said, holding up the toy. "It's a ruse. C'mon." He walked them back to his black Jaguar, parked in a pay lot. He popped the trunk and placed the bear inside, and then reached under it and lifted the board hiding the spare tire. He pulled out a sleek silver klaive, sheathed in black leather.

"Hey, I haven't seen that before," Evan said. "That's not Solemn Lord."

"Nope, this was Arkady's. It was his original, the one he brought from Russia. He switched to a bigger one later, but this one had sentimental value for him, so he never got rid of it. I didn't really give him a chance to collect it before his exile — not that he deserved it. But I figure it's a good gesture to give it back to his sept. Considering what the bastard did against Jo'clatth'mattric."

They were all silent, remembering the painting they'd seen on the wall of the Wyrm creature's lair as it died, the icons revealing that Arkady had fought the Wyrm dragon in the spirit world and weakened it, allowing Albrecht's war party to claim victory.

Albrecht pulled out a pocketknife and cut open a slit in the stuffed bear's back. He yanked out some stuffing and then slid Arkady's klaive into the hole. He grabbed a roll of duct tape and sealed up the tear. Lifting the now-heavier bear from the trunk, he closed the lid.

"There. Now I can deliver it without raising eyebrows among the locals."

The walk to Tatiana Café wasn't long. They sat down at an outdoor table, under a bright, rainbow colored umbrella, and looked around for anyone who might look slightly Garou related. A young couple, a boy and girl, sat at the nearest table, laughing about something. Two men sat at a table closer to the wall. They both wore "I love New York" T-shirts.

"That's gotta be them," Albrecht said. "No decent local wears that kind of crap." He turned to look at them and nodded. They nodded back and one of them smiled from ear to ear.

"Hello, guys!" he said with an obvious Russian or Eastern European accent. He stood up and came over to their table, his hand thrust out to Albrecht. "It is good seeing you."

Albrecht shook the man's hand. "Yeah, same here. You the Crescent Moon Kin?"

The man's smile seemed to grow even larger. He nodded his head vigorously. "Da! Wyrmfoe?"

Albrecht nodded. "That's me. Albrecht. Your name?"

"Yuri. Yuri Zapor. Please to be meeting you. And your friends?"

"These are my packmates, Mari Cabrah and Evan." He intentionally omitted Evan's Garou moniker; it sounded weird outside of Garou culture. He also didn't mention their respective tribes. "And your friend?"

"He is Yorgi. He is also pleased to meet you." Yorgi nodded but did not get up.

"So," Albrecht said. "Where're we going?"

"Not far, not far. We can walk. Our friends from overseas wait there for us. Are you ready? Or do you wish to order food first?"

"No," Albrecht said, standing up. "I'm ready to go now." He motioned for Evan to carry the bear, but Mari picked it up, smiling wickedly.

"Mustn't forget my prize," she said.

Yuri looked suspiciously at the stuffed animal, and leaned over to Albrecht, speaking low. "There is no surprise inside bear, is there? It is not sporting."

"It's just a gift," Albrecht said. "Nothing deadly."

Yuri nodded. "I can trust you. You big king, they say. Kings don't lie, yes?"

"Let's just get going," Albrecht said. "We don't want to keep our emissaries waiting, do we?"

Yuri shrugged and walked away from the café. Yorgi stood up, pulled some crumpled bills from his pocket and threw them onto the table as a tip. He fell in behind the group as they walked down a street leading away from the boardwalk.

"I apologize for doubting you," Yuri said as they walked. "In our… business… such things are not uncommon."

"What things?" Albrecht said.

"Using toys or other things to hide weapons. Is done all the time."

"And what sort of business are you in?"

Yuri smiled again. "We are gangsters, yes? Is that how you say it here? Organized crime?" His smile disappeared, replaced by a frown. "Is not crime. Keeping our people poor is the crime. We provide for them. We need no law for that."

"I thought so. No surprise there. Everybody knows Coney Island is full of Russian Mafia. What I don't get is how it connects to the 'family' business, if you get my meaning."

"Ah. I understand. We help the family, yes? But we are not family ourselves, and glad for it. No insult, please. But, you are in the more dangerous business, yes? We simply smuggle and remove… obstacles now and then. You get your hands dirty all the time. Proud work. We do not have the… breeding for it. But what we do have are connections, yes? The kind needed to move people from Russia to America. In the Mother Country, we are the hidden royalty. We are the kings who say who stays in power and who is deposed. We serve the true family that way."

"I guess it sort of makes sense. It doesn't sound like standard operating procedure, though. Do you have even a drop of Tsar's blood in you?"

"Me? No. Yorgi's great-great grandmother once romanced a prince, though, and bore his children in secret. You see, in Russia, it is dangerous thing to be royal. Bolsheviks killed the royals. Stalin killed anyone related to royals. Princes and princesses must hide in Russia. Much as Churchmen had to hide under Stalin. Saints unknown to the West, martyred many times over, all unknown except to those who pray in secret."

"How do you keep the bloodlines, then? No offense, but… well, it's not exactly Silver Fang tradition to breed with just anyone."

"No offense to ask this. We are proud of our blood. America… she does not keep track of her people. Immigrants spread out, forgetting their past. Never in Russia. The police did not track such things, but everyone knows who their family is, many generations back. Silver Fangs know. It is secret, but we know."

Albrecht nodded but didn't say anything else. They walked for a few more blocks and stopped outside of an old brick building, a factory of some sort, although there was no sign to identity what was made inside. Yuri opened the door and motioned them in. The walls of the front room were lined with glass delicatessen cases, filled with various colorful kinds of candy.

"Come, into back room," Yuri said, walking behind the glass cases and through a doorway. Albrecht, Mari and Evan followed him, with Yorgi coming behind. They passed a few small offices with desks and went through another doorway onto the factory floor. Conveyor belts lined the walls, silent and unmoving now, but clearly designed to transport candy from vats to dye jets and into a packaging room. "Is closed today. Everybody has day off, so that we can meet in quiet. Please, follow me further." He led them down a set of stairs; at the bottom of the landing, he knocked on a door and waited for an answer.

A voice came from inside. "*Shto?*"

"*Eezveeneetyeh,*" Yuri said. "Our guests have come."

"*Panyatna,*" the voice said.

Yuri opened the door and went in, followed by Albrecht and the others. The basement was large, almost as large as the factory floor above, but luxuriously decorated. A huge, widescreen TV took up a section of the far wall, with rows of leather seats before it. Two pool tables were spread out

further down the wall. A small kitchen with a humming refrigerator could be seen at the far end of the room.

A man and a woman stood in the center of the room, both dressed in dark, stylish clothes. As Albrecht entered, they bowed and lowered themselves on bended knee, faces to the floor.

"*Zdrasvooytyeh*," the dark-haired woman said. "*Preeyatna pasnakomeetsa*. Greetings, King Albrecht. It is good to finally meet you." She seemed to be in her mid to late thirties, her face smooth and unlined. Her skin's pallor implied that she rarely ever saw the sun.

"May the sun and moon shine brightly on your coming and going," the gray-haired man said, in what sounded like a British accent. He was older, perhaps in his early fifties, but he was well built, broad shouldered and lean, as if he exercised regularly. On his fingers were many rings, at least one per finger, except for thumbs, with some fingers bearing more than one. They were each ornately carved from gold, and some were set with delicate gems.

Albrecht stood looking down at them for a silent moment, receiving their tribute. Yuri stopped by the door and looked nervous, glancing sheepishly at Mari and Evan, as if he only now realized some breach of etiquette on his part and expected that he would be punished for it. Albrecht then raised his palms, face up. "Thanks. You can get up now."

The two Garou nodded and stood, looking Albrecht squarely in the face. The man spoke, his British accent even more obvious now.

"I am Lord Byeli Syertseh, Galliard of the Lodge of the Sun, House Gleaming Eye. My name in English means White Heart."

The women then spoke, her voice tinged with a Russian accent, but not so thick as Yuri's. "And I am Noch Volasi — Nightmane. I am a Theurge of the Lodge of the Moon, House Crescent Moon."

"Pleased to meet you," Albrecht said. "I'm glad you came all this way. I hope it helps improve things between our septs. There're a lot of bad years between our people I'd just as soon put in the past."

The man nodded, smiling. "I am glad to hear that, King Albrecht, for that is my dearest wish for this meeting."

The woman said nothing more, but watched Albrecht intently.

"These are my packmates," Albrecht said, motioning Mari and Evan to step forward.

"I have heard of Mari," Lord Byeli said. "We know all about the Jarlsdottir's Grand Concolation and what came of it. I see that you are well-healed, my lady."

Mari's eyes narrowed. "I am. At my full strength, too."

"This is wonderful news," he said, turning away from her to look at Evan. "And I have also heard of Evan Heals-the-Past. Your pack is legendary, oh king."

"Damn straight they are," Albrecht said. "You couldn't ask for better friends than these." He took the stuffed bear from Mari. "I brought a gift for you, to help smooth over past rifts."

"Oh?" Lord Byeli said. "We, too, have a gift." He looked at Nightmane and she took a small lacquer box from out of her pocket. She reached into another pocket and removed a tiny key, which she fitted to the lock, but did not turn.

Albrecht tore the duct tape off the cut he'd made in the bear and drew forth the klaive. Nightmane sucked in her breath when she saw it. "*Spaseeba*. Moonsliver."

"What'd you say?" Albrecht said, handing her the klaive.

"Moonsliver," she said, receiving the klaive reverently with her free hand. "That is its name. I thank you so much for this. It has been in our lineage for ages, lost when Arkady escaped the Hag. That you now return it to us is… magnificent." She looked to Lord Byeli with a strange look in her eyes.

"Yes," Lord Byeli said, looking away. "It is incredible. My lord will be most grateful. And now, your gift." He motioned to Nightmane. She nodded and placed the klaive on the floor by her feet, and then stepped forward, looking humbly downward, not meeting Albrecht's eyes, and turned the key in the lock.

The case sprung open, revealing a ruby amulet shaped like a long-tailed phoenix. She held it out to Albrecht.

"Incredible workmanship," he said, picking it up. He held it closer and examined the intricate carving around the gem's setting. "Who made this?"

"Our totem, Firebird. He asked that we give it to you. I am sorry, but he demanded that you personally answer his queries."

Albrecht looked confused for a moment and then angry. The ruby suddenly lit up as if on fire, and a blaze of shimmering orange light engulfed his face. He collapsed onto the ground with a grunt.

Before the two Silver Fangs could bat an eyelash, a huge black and white dire wolf bounded into them, knocking them both to the floor. It sunk its four claws into Lord Byeli's chest and growled into his face, speaking in the Garou tongue: "What did you do?!"

Lord Byeli closed his eyes and twisted his head to the floor — as close a gesture of submission as he could make while pinned under Mari's Hispo form. She slowly backed off him, still growling.

"We did nothing but deliver our totem to the king," Nightmane said, looking sad. "He now questions the king."

"What are you talking about?" Mari barked.

Evan, leaning over Albrecht, spoke. "He's okay, Mari. But he's unconscious. I think he's dreaming, from the way his eyes are moving under the lids."

"Yes, he dreams," Nightmane said. "He is in a chimare, a dream-realm made by Firebird. We can do nothing until the totem has made its decision."

Mari leapt over to Nightmane and shoved her snout inches away from her face. "Decision? About what?"

"About his accusations against our Lord Arkady. Firebird could not see Arkady's heart once he returned. He wants to know if the rumors are true, if Arkady betrayed us to the Wyrm."

"Of course they're true!" Evan yelled. "We were there. All you had to do was ask us, not subject Albrecht to some spirit trap!"

"But how would Firebird know then?" Lord Byeli said, sitting up, clearly shaken. "He has to encounter Albrecht's heart, not his words. We can do nothing but wait."

"I am ashamed at what we have done," Nightmane said, her head bowed. "But we must do what must be done. I did not expect the king to return Moonsliver to us. I pray that the peace is not broken forever."

Mari shifted into Crinos form and pointed a claw at both Lord Byeli and Nightmane. "You better both pray Albrecht wakes up in a few minutes or it'll be more than the peace that's broken."

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Albrecht opened his eyes in a snowy pine forest clearing. Something hot and bright flickered above him. He raised his eyes and saw a bird floating in the air, smoldering and burning as if on fire, but it seemed not to feel any pain from the conflagration of its flesh. It feathers were beautiful, especially the multicolored, long tail feathers. Its eyes looked on him questioningly, as if it were waiting for him to speak.

Albrecht looked around and saw that he was alone. He knew immediately he was in some sort of spirit realm, and had been plucked here by a powerful spirit. The box must have been some sort of fetish relic, because he could think of no charm that would allow a spirit to yank him across the Gauntlet against his will.

He stood up and dusted the snow off himself and then met the spirit's eyes. "Okay, you pulled me in here for some reason. I don't know how, and I don't know why you couldn't ask permission first; I would gladly have gone along. Anything to make peace, right? But now I'm pissed. I don't know what you want, but you've just seriously ticked off a Silver Fang king. It better damn well be worth it."

Firebird gave a half smile. At least, Albrecht interpreted the bent of its head and tilt of its beak as such. It spoke. "I see the fire has not gone out of the belly of all my cousin's children. I have long been out of touch with those who left the Mother Country. I have angered you, but know this: You are a king, but I am a totem, father and lord of many spirits. My kingdom stretches far and wide, and I have many subjects. I am broodmate to Falcon, who rules your soul. By this ancient pact did I order you into this realm. I honor those of you who honor me, but I need not ask permission to demand answers from one who has accused my chosen child of corruption."

"What the hell are you talking about?" Albrecht said, crossing his arms.

"I speak of Arkady Ice-Claw, he who escaped the Mother Country but who came back in exile from yours."

"Oh, for crying out loud! *Him* again? He's almost worse to me dead than alive!"

"I could not read his heart upon his return, for he had learned to hide it from me. But rumors came soon enough, claims by you that he was tainted, that he had chosen the ways of the Wyrm and had been punished for it. I could not believe these stories, for Arkady still led my other children well, and fought long and hard against the Wyrm. That he still lived at all caused me to doubt further, for surely any king who had been wronged by a Wyrm-tainted tribemate would kill that tribemate, for the good of the tribe. And yet, you spared Arkady. Why? Were your accusations untrue?"

"You got a lot of nerve asking me that," Albrecht said, pacing around the clearing. "Damn straight I should have killed Arkady. Don't think I didn't regret not doing so a million times. But it all comes back to one thing: Falcon wanted me to spare him. He wanted my first decree with the Silver Crown to be one of mercy, not punishment. Seems that the first time colors the whole kingship thing thereafter. If I'd killed him, I would have had to keep on killing upstarts."

Firebird hovered in silence for a while, seemingly deep in thought. He then spoke. "I believe you speak true. I am in deep sorrow for what my child did to you. I heard the stories, but refused to believe. Now I know."

"What's the big deal, anyway? Arkady finally made up for it all by going out with a bang and wounding Jo'clatth'mattric while doing it. Way I understand it, a horde of ancestors joined him. I still hate the bastard, but I figure it's not my place to question so many ancestors, even if I do wear the Silver Crown. Arkady's dead to me and the world. Let him lie."

"You are very generous for a king," Firebird said. "I honor that. I will give you a boon, something you seek. You wish to know the ways of my children in the Mother Country. I cannot divulge their secrets, but I can show you what tempered them, the hardships that forged their steely hearts. I would have you know the terrible world into which they are born, and the horrors they have only recently overcome."

"I think I'd prefer—" Before Albrecht could finish speaking, Firebird swooped down and engulfed him. Albrecht instinctively shifted into Crinos form, flinching from the flames, but they did not burn. Instead, they formed a background on which he saw moving shadows, which became shapes and then people. He watched a tableau of history played before him in the belly of the Firebird.

A pack of wolves rushed across the tundra, growing in number, spreading out across all of Russia and beyond. At their core were 13 white wolves, each leading a group of gray and black wolves. Then the sky shattered and a star fell, crashing into the Earth and sending tremors for miles, vaulting soil into the air. From its smoky ruins, shapes writhed and flexed huge wings. A hideous harmony of roars erupted and dragons shot forth in all directions to seize the land for their own. Forests and villages burned, incinerating people and animals. Only the wolves stood firm, howling a summons to all their kin. As the dragons slithered forth, the wolves took the Crinos battleform and threw themselves at the horrors. They died in droves, but for every ten that died, one reached a beast and bit into it. Soon, a score of small injuries spilled blood into the Earth, and the dragons burrowed deep to escape their marauders. They curled up and slept for ages, slowly healing their wounds.

The wolves did not sleep. They spent years building spirit wards over the dragons' nest-graves, keeping the beasts asleep, pinning their power deep within where it could not threaten them again. In their work, they neglected their duties, and humans spread far and wide, building well beyond their right. By the time the wolves realized what had happened, it was too late. The Age of Man was upon them. They at first tried to terrorize humans into submission, to cull those they could. When men built castles and bows to hold the wolves back, they knew they had to go within, to rule humans in their own shapes.

They bred into the bloodlines of kings, of hereditary rulers, and so became rulers themselves. All men in the Mother Country followed the secret laws of the wolves-who-walked-as-men.

And so it was until the turn of the last century, when the perfidy of men again grew strong. The ruling wolves had become weak, complacent in their power, more concerned with their own petty struggles than the state of the world. The mass of humanity rose up against them and killed their ruling Kinfolk, and even managed to slay a few wolves-who-walked-as-men. Then, they began a cruel hunt for all wolves, even those who could not take the shape of men. The ruling wolves fell, their power crushed. Before they could unite and assert themselves again, evil awakened.

The dragons of old, the Zmei, broke free from their bindings, and walked the land, aiding the ancient Hag, Baba Yaga, enemy of all the wolves. A reign of tyranny covered the land like a shawl, and the wolves could only fight small battles to save themselves, never the war to decide the fate of the land.

That changed when Arkady returned. He joined with another, a strikingly beautiful pure white wolf from the mountains, and began a new campaign of savagery and terror against the Mother Country's oppressors. Soon, with mysterious aid still unknown, the Hag fell, and her empire of sorrow with her.

Now, the sun again shines pure on the Mother Country, and the spirits awaken, cautiously walking the land again after their long imprisonment. Russia awakens.

Albrecht blinked and the story was over. Firebird flew into the sky and disappeared into the dark night of stars, his own light becoming one flashing dot among many.

Albrecht took a deep breath, closed his eyes, and opened them again. He was still in the snowy clearing, silence all around him.

"Shit," he said.

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"Firebird has completed his questioning," Nightmane said, pointing at the amulet in Albrecht's hand, which now glowed bright red.

"Then why isn't Albrecht awake?" Evan said. Albrecht still lay on the ground, unmoving.

"I... I don't know," Nightmane said. She moved over to the king and picked up the amulet, holding it to her forehead as she closed her eyes and prayed quietly in Russian. "Firebird does not know. He dispatched the realm. It shouldn't still be there...."

"What's that light?" Mari said, pointing to Albrecht's head, which now had a blue halo about it.

"It's the Crown," Evan said. "It's glowing."

"The Silver Crown," Nightmane said reverently. "It has seized the dream realm and now uses it to speak to the king."

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Albrecht turned around in a circle, looking for any sign of another living being or spirit. When he came back to his starting point, he noticed white wolves amidst the trees around him. He counted 12 of them. They stared at him with ancient eyes, as if judging him.

"I have an idea of who you guys are," Albrecht said," but I don't know why you're here. You want to clue me in?"

The wolves turned as one and began moving away. The last of them turned back to look at Albrecht disdainfully, as if impatient with him. He seemed to be waiting for Albrecht to follow.

"Okay, I'll tag along. But I got to tell you, I'm getting pissed all over again. I don't know how much more of this I'm going to take." He dropped into Lupus and followed after the wolves. He noticed that his fur color was almost exactly the same as theirs, a pure, untarnished white.

It seemed then, for the first time, that he entered a dream. The landscape shifted around him as they ran, but it all seemed natural, the way such things do in a dream. At one point, he wasn't running on all fours, but walking on two, following a parade of kings down a street before him. He could see Russia's trademark onion domes on some of the buildings, but not any particular ones he could identify. It was as if he were in an archetypal Russian city, rather than in a particular Earthly city.

Then, he stood on the bare tundra, facing a huge, roaring war-form Garou. The Ancient King. His eyes revealed more than rage: they were pits into madness. Albrecht looked around and saw his tribemates, watching, keeping their distance. The challenge was his, but he saw their eyes, their silent prayers for his victory, for him to deliver them from an insane king.

He remembered Morningkill, his great-grandfather. Albrecht had sworn when he took the Crown that he would never succumb to such madness, that he would die first. He growled and assumed the battleform, charging forward against the more powerful, older king. They crashed together like rocks tumbling from a mountain, the sound deafening those who watched.

Then, Albrecht sat on a rock-hewn throne in an ancient valley between the mountains, a lush place untouched by human hands. He received tribute from his tribe, for he was now king. He sat in judgment over others and made decrees he could not remember.

Time passed, years he could not count. He sat on his throne, older now, passing judgment, issuing decrees. But he knew they were humiliating demands, orders no proud warrior should ever have to execute. His subjects looked upon him in fear, but did as he asked. He cackled madly.

He stood alone on the tundra, his tribe gone. One man stood nearby, a warrior who hated him. The warrior shifted into Crinos form and lunged at Albrecht, who instantly shifted into the battleform himself, meeting the charge full on, his claws driving deeply into his opponent's guts, given force by the Garou's own momentum. But the warrior still managed to knock Albrecht over, falling with him to the ground, his jaws snapping for Albrecht's neck.

Albrecht slipped away and leapt aside, growling loudly. He could see now, far off in the trees, his tribe, watching the battle, desperation in their eyes. But he saw how their sympathy went to his opponent, and how their eyes held only fear for him.

He choked back a howl of despair and grasped the Silver Crown. He flung it from his head onto the barren earth.

He heard gasps among the trees, and his opponent stared at the fallen crown, stunned. A massive rumbling rose from the earth and tremors shook the ground. The warrior tried to rise but fell again, unable to keep his balance. Albrecht shifted into Hispo form, taking to all fours.

The earth exploded and a massive, scaled creature vaulted forth, swallowing the Silver Crown in its wide, toothy maw. Albrecht howled in rage and leapt forward, sinking his teeth deeply into the most foul-tasting flesh he'd ever tasted. Noxious blood welled up into his mouth, choking him, but he refused to open his jaws. The creature thrashed in pain and agony, trying to dislodge him. The beast slammed him into the ground and he felt almost every bone fracture at once, but still he did not release his grip. Eventually, the thing stopped its movements and became still.

Albrecht stood up on unsteady legs, every step agony, and tore into the thing's belly. He poked his jaws in and gently withdrew the Silver Crown. He loped away from the steaming body and collapsed, the last of his strength spent. The warrior he had faced earlier now cautiously approached and rubbed his muzzle against Albrecht's. He then shifted into human form and placed the crown over his head. Albrecht closed his eyes, relieved. There was no bitter regret, no anger, only pride that the best among the tribe would now lead and carry on in his stead.

He opened his eyes to darkness. He felt a slight, chill breeze ruffling his Lupus form fur, but could feel no surface around him except the rocky floor. A light appeared somewhere ahead, as if around a corner, and as it grew brighter,

he could see that he was in a cavern. A single passage led out, and the light approached him from that way.

A white wolf appeared and looked into his eyes. So bright and pure was its fur that it glowed brighter than the full moon on a clear night. It turned and walked back down the passage. Albrecht followed. He noticed that the wolf left no prints on the sandy ground, and he realized whom it was he followed. He swallowed nervously and moved to catch up to it.

He could see sunlight ahead, at the end of the passage. A small hole led up into the world. The wolf stopped and met his eyes again, and bowed to him. It watched as he walked toward the hole and the light.

Albrecht stuck his head out into the world and felt a warm breeze hit him. He sucked it in like a swimmer coming up for air, and felt enlivened by it, as if it were the Breath of Gaia itself.

He opened his eyes to see Evan leaning over him, a worried look on his face.

"Hey, kid," he said. "I feel like I died and came back to life."

"He's awake!" Evan yelled.

"*Balsho-yeh spaseeba*," Nightmane said under her breath, as if speaking to someone who wasn't there. "Thank Gaia you are well."

"What happened?" Mari said. "Are you all right? Do I kill these two?"

"Hold on!" Albrecht said, sitting up. "Nobody kills nobody. There's been enough of that."

"King Albrecht," Lord Byeli said, standing up slowly from where Mari had crouched over him. "I thank the spirits that you have come back to us. I apologize with all my heart for my actions. I submit to whatever punishment you choose."

"As do I," Nightmane said, prostrating herself on the floor.

Albrecht stood up. "I'd be raging at you two right now if it hadn't been for this ornament I'm wearing. It doesn't talk much, but when it does, I listen. I'm not sure what it said, but I think I've figured out some of it."

"Well, tell us!" Evan said. "We've been watching you dream for the past five minutes."

"Five?" Albrecht said. "That's surreal; seemed more like years. First off, your totem," he said, addressing the two foreign Garou, "had a few words with me. I think I answered its questions to its satisfaction, but not to mine. I think you two owe me for that one."

"Of course," Lord Byeli said in his clipped British accent. "Anything. We knew the cost for such a ruse, and will gladly pay it."

"Yeah, you will," Albrecht said. "You're going to tell me everything I need to know about the customs of Russian Fangs."

"We will tell you all," Lord Byeli said. "I know much Silver Fang lore forgotten by the Western tribes."

"Tell me this first: why the hell do you have a British accent?"

"I was born and raised in England. My Kin were Russian, but I was adopted into House Gleaming Eye. I was in Russia when the Shadow Curtain rose, and my hardships there tied me more closely to my new comrades in the Firebird Sept than any I had known at home. They are my family now. I know not only about Russian Silver Fangs, but also about our tribe from all over the world. I trained as a lorekeeper, and had gone to Russia seeking forgotten secrets of our tribe."

"Did you find them?"

"Yes. And much more."

"Then you'll tell them all to me. That's my price for this little fiasco."

Lord Byeli smiled. "You do not know how proud I am to suffer this task. I have sworn to keep my lore secret for too long. Now, you have pried the lock from my chest, and my treasure hoard is yours." He bowed once more to Albrecht.

Albrecht nodded. "Good save." He looked at Nightmane. "And you, too. You'll tell me what you know also?"

"Yes, if you command it. But know this: my secrets are more terrible than his. And one is the most terrible of all."

"I'll be the judge of that."

"Wait a minute," Evan said. "You're not done with *us* yet. Spit it out! What happened after Firebird released you. The Silver Crown started glowing."

"Yeah, it was the crown. Some sort of test. About kingship and when to relinquish it. It showed me… I can't say it. Not here. We'll talk about it later."

"Wait!" Nightmane said. "Please, oh king. I hunger to know what happened. I have studied the lore of the Silver Crown for many years. So rarely has it spoken directly to its bearers, I must know what it told you!"

"And why the hell should I tell you?" Albrecht said, a growl escaping, the first sign of the anger he'd been controlling. "You want to know? Earn it! Tell me what I want to know, and maybe I'll tell you what the crown said. Got it?"

Nightmane bowed her head. "Yes, sire. I understand. Forgive my trespass."

"Okay, enough of this. I'm leaving. Let me put this for you in the high style: I hereby command you to be at my court two days hence. If you don't show, no Russian Mafia can save you. I'll call a hunt throughout my kingdom and Europe, and take the fight to Tvarivich if I have to. That clear?"

"Most clear, oh king," Lord Byeli said, bowing. "We shall be there. I would not think of disobeying he who wears the Silver Crown, not to mention one who has so magnanimously suffered our indelicate introductions."

"All right then. In two days." Albrecht looked around. "Where the hell'd Yuri and Yorgi go?"

"They left as soon as you collapsed," Mari said. "Scared half to death they'd be torn to ribbons as accomplices, I suspect."

"Ah, screw 'em," Albrecht said. "Let's go." He headed for the stairs, Evan and Mari following behind. They went

back the path they'd come, walking to Albrecht's car in silence. Mari and Evan could both tell that Albrecht had a lot on his mind. When they got to the car, Albrecht looked at his packmates.

"Thanks for coming," he said. "I figured they'd pull some shit, but nothing like that. It's sort of an old Silver Fang tradition to test foreign leaders in some fashion or other. Usually, it's an honest-to-Gaia challenge, not some bullshit spirit snare."

"Are you okay?" Evan asked. "You looked pretty energized when you woke up, but you seem pretty down now."

"That dream-realm... weird shit. This oversized wedding band on my head doesn't dole out happy tests. It was like I died. Went out fighting, but sacrificed myself for the next generation. Or some shit like that." He grew quiet and looked out over the ocean. "I saw the First Wolf."

Mari frowned. "Who is that?"

"An old Silver Fang legend," Albrecht said. "Death came for Gaia, and took Her into the Underworld. The only animal brave enough to go get her back was Wolf, but he had to die to do it. In return, Gaia breathed life back into him. But he bore the mark of his encounter with Death ever since: his fur was whiter than white, brighter than bleached bone."

"And you saw him?" Evan said, incredulously. "That's a powerful ancestor-spirit if I ever heard of one."

"Yeah, if it was really him. It *was* a dream-realm after all. Might just of been a big case of wish fulfillment. I don't know. It seemed real at the time. But don't all dreams?"

"Yes, but that doesn't explain that," Mari said, pointing toward his head.

"Huh?" Albrecht said. "The crown? Does it look different?"

"No, but your hair does. It's more obvious in daylight than it was in the basement: Your hair's even whiter than it was before."

Albrecht grabbed his braided hair and looked it. "Are you sure? I can't tell."

"She's right," Evan said. "I didn't notice it at first. I knew something was different but I couldn't put my finger on it. Your hair is definitely whiter. You know what that means."

"I'm getting old?"

"No. You really did see a ghost." Evan smiled.

Albrecht smiled back, but only half-heartedly. He unlocked his car door. "You guys want a ride back to the city? I can go there before heading to Vermont."

"No, we'll take the train again," Mari said. "But if you need us at court, don't hesitate to call. Mother Larissa will open a bridge for us anytime we need it."

"I know, and I will. But these guys won't cause any more trouble, not after that. There're rules to this sort of thing, and they've been given a commandment. They'll behave or I'll shove that klaive I gave them into their guts."

Mari smiled and nodded. Evan rolled his eyes.

Albrecht got in the car and revved the engine. He waved at his packmates and backed out of the lot, speeding away down the road. He hit the highway well over the speed limit, staring ahead down the road and thinking about death and the Mother Country, ancestral home of all the Silver Fangs.

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SILVER FANGS™

By Bill Bridges and Adam Tinworth

Werewolf created by Mark Rein•Hagen

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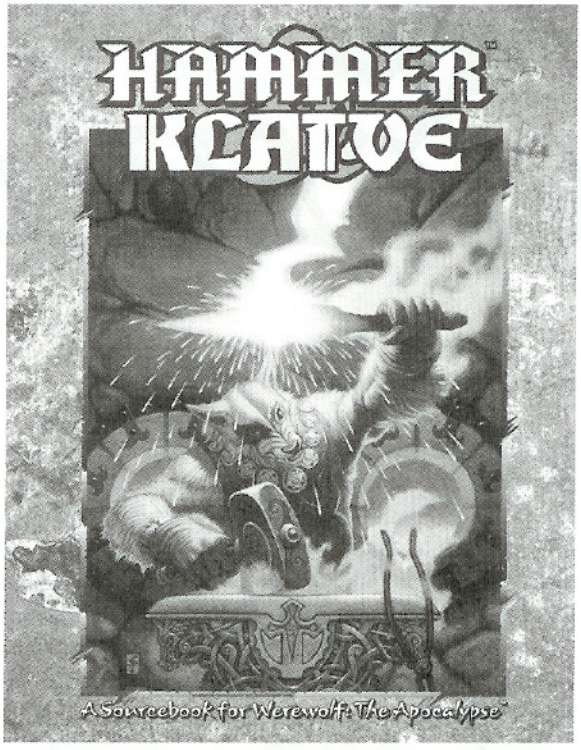

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Chapter One: Under Falcon's Wing

And shall the figure of God's majesty,
His captain, steward, deputy elect,
Anointed, crowned, planted many years,
Be judged by subject and inferior breath?
— Shakespeare, *Richard II*
He that once enters at a tyrant's door,
Becomes a slave, though he were free before.
— Sophocles

Albrecht approached the ancient throne of the North Country Protectorate, hewn into the trunk of a huge old oak tree. Lord Byeli waited for him there, under the shadows of its vast branches.

"Okay, guys," Albrecht said to his entourage of seneschal, Gatekeeper, Warder and others, who had followed him from the mansion after their ritual morning breakfast and territory update. "Disperse. I've got business with this guy."

"My lord," said Mountain Runner, Squire of the Lodge of the Sun. "Lord Byeli has already performed the Ceremony of Preception, as supervised by our lodge. He is fully prepared for his task by the rules laid down in the Trail of Elder Days."

"Good to know," Albrecht said. "Wouldn't want to upset propriety. Okay, I'll see you guys tonight. If anything comes up, you know where to find me."

The members of the court nodded and went their separate ways. Albrecht walked over to the throne and sat down, slouching.

"Morning, Lord Byeli. People treating you well here? Hospitality all right?"

"More than I could have ever hoped for, my lord," Lord Byeli said, bowing. He wore a ceremonial white robe emblazoned with golden suns. In his hair was a single falcon feather. "Is my lord ready to begin?"

"Yeah, I'm ready." Albrecht motioned to the only other seat there, a large, medieval-looking wooden chair that had been placed across from the throne. Byeli sat, adjusting his robe so that the folds were symmetrical. "So, let me get this straight," Albrecht continued, "you instruct me during the day, since you're Lodge of the Sun, and Nightmane instructs me at night, since she's Lodge of the Moon?"

"Correct, my lord. So it has been done for centuries. I will tell you things as they are, and she will tell you things as they could have been."

"What's that supposed to mean? She's just going to whine about what never was?"

"No, the difference is more subtle than that. I cannot say for sure, for the Lodge of the Moon holds secrets they will reveal only to kings, but as I understand it, she speaks of more spiritual, metaphorical truths behind the deeds of history that I shall recount."

"Okay. I think I get it. Where do we start?"

"From the beginning, of course," Lord Byeli said. "There are many creation myths told by Silver Fangs, but those in Russia are the oldest, carved on the mountain walls in the Urals. They are the stories told by our most ancient ancestors, and so should be heeded by all Silver Fangs."

"Sounds right to me," Albrecht said, settling into the throne. He knew every knot and bole on the tree, and knew exactly the most comfortable positions to take when sitting for long hours. "Okay, shoot. Tell me these ancestor tales."

Creation Myths

The Time Before Tribes

As all know, there was once a time when there were no tribes, when all Garou were united only by pack. But even before this time, there was an age wherein no Garou had yet been born.

In this time, only the totems represented life, and their actions during these years determined much of their children's behavior even into our time. All Fangs know the tale of the Wolf who rescued Gaia from Death, and the reward she gave him of renewed life. His fur held the Secret of Death ever after, bleached white, for white is the true color of death, as many cultures outside of the West know.

We Silver Fangs claim the Death Wolf as our ancestor, for his blood is stronger in our veins than in any other bloodline. The purity of our fur shows this. We also follow his example to lead and act where others shirk their duties. Remember, no other animal would act to save Gaia at the risk of its own life — except for Wolf. If for no other reason, this sacrifice alone would allow the Silver Fangs to rule over all other wolves.

But there are other reasons.

Ordination of the Fangs as Those Who Lead

It is said by some that humans are not natural to this world, that they were a dream of Gaia's given life before their time, a premature birth, and so are not fully formed, lacking fur, claws, sharp teeth, or anything with which to thrive in the wild.

The Weaver took pity on them and honed their minds until they were among the most cunning of creatures — when they choose to use such cunning, for many of them do not. These are among the most stupid of beings, capable of being tricked even by that ignoramus among totems, Monkey, whom they are said to resemble.

And yet Monkey has a tail, useful for balance and grasping. Humans don't even have that. Perhaps they are closer to Monkey's progeny, Ape. And yet, they lack Ape's strength and family bonds. Truly, humans were among the most pitiful of creatures. No wonder even the Weaver's heart was moved for them.

Gaia felt badly for Her new children, who had crawled from Her dream womb while She slept, before She could awaken and birth them consciously and fully fleshed. For this reason, humans are often called the Hasty Ones, for their impatience to be born properly.

Gaia begged Her animal children to go to the humans and teach them how to survive without claws or teeth. But, as is typical, the other animals found excuses to avoid the duty. Eagle claimed that he was too busy shaping the clouds into beautiful forms to please Gaia, and so could not land long enough to speak to humans. Deer complained that humans could not keep up, and so could not hear her lesson. Bear grumbled that they would wander away when he slept the Long Sleep, and would forget what he had told them by the time he awoke.

Who, then, finally accepted Gaia's task? Who was selfless enough to do what the others refused? Wolf, of course. Well, *wolves*, really, for Wolf had by this time whelped many children. Some packs agreed to go to the humans and teach them to survive.

But of course, humans feared them and fled as soon as they saw the wolves come near. They hid in caves were the wolves could not reach them, and shivered in fear when the wolves gathered outside, howling for them to come out.

Now, as was true of many animals back then, wolves could wear different shapes, so they consulted their alpha and realized that they had to take the shapes of humans if they were to walk among them. And this they did. They soon joined humans in their caves and told them many stories, and led them outside, where they could instruct them on the names of other beings, such as Acorn, Larva, and even Yam, from whom they could feed.

Eventually, after they won the humans' trust, they took them hunting. Some humans had already used the Weaver's clever gifts to make flint knives and spears. Although these things were strange to the wolves, they saw them as acceptable substitutes for fangs. They taught humans to use these things when hunting other animals, and — more importantly — they taught them how to call to the Animal Elders and gain permission to hunt.

But humans were still weak. Only in numbers were they strong. It was a good thing that wolves taught them, for wolves had long known the secret of forming packs and working together against prey. They taught this secret to humans, who then used it to form hunting parties, and then families, and then tribes, and then whole cultures and civilizations.

Then again, perhaps it was not such a good thing that their first instructors were wolves. Maybe the world would be better off if Mole had not shirked his duty. Then perhaps humans would be more like the tiny shrews they today believe they once evolved from, deftly dodging the heavy steps of giant lizards.

The Weaver's Wrath

Well, soon enough, humans become more beholden to the wolf-men than to the Weaver. This, of course, did not go over well with the Weaver, who has always been jealous of her adopted children, for it is hard for her to birth her own. She cursed the wolf-men to remain in their human forms forever, barring them from their own kind.

The wolf-men howled in misery and begged Gaia to undo the curse, but Gaia, tearfully, could not undo the Weaver's work on Her own. But She had a sister....

Luna heard the cries of the wolf-men and knew the sacrifice they had made. She came to them and told of a way they might regain their forms, for she is the Changing One, and knows well the arts of shapeshifting and skin-sloughing.

It was a cruel and harsh solution: the wolf-men had to hunt the humans, and so destroy all the good will they had gained. Only by reversing their teachings, and instilling fear in humans, could they undo the Weaver's threads of fate and become fully wolfen again. But it was no mere hunt that was called for: they had to slay the human leaders, the alphas and betas of the human packs, those who knew the ways of the wolf-men best.

And so, the wolf-men turned on the humans, hounding them to their caves with their own spears and clubs. And they fell on the human leaders and stabbed them cruelly.

All but one among them. She raised her spear to strike a human man she had come to love, but did not have the heart to drive it down into his flesh. Tears came to her eyes and she dropped her spear. She opened her arms to embrace the human, but he fled from her. She knew then that she could never again live happily as a wolf, and could never again live

among the humans she had almost killed. She lifted the spear and drove it into her own body, her last words a wolf howl of pain and sorrow.

The others had passed Luna's test; one failed. For this reason, only some of the threads of fate were severed. Luna declared that each wolf-man had to choose what form he would wear from then on, but that, in times of strife, they would wear neither form, wearing instead a form in-between, a form of rage and war, a shape that would strike fear in all creatures.

They were no longer wolves, but neither were they men. They were Garou.

Some chose to take the form of wolves again, and they returned to their kind, but were ever after outsiders from their kind, not part of their packs. Others, reminded of their love for humans by their packmate's suicide, chose the form of humans, but were likewise ostracized by their new kind. And thus were the breeds of Garou established.

As a curious note, you will rarely ever find metis legends among the Silver Fangs. No ancient creation myth — at least, none highly regarded — treats with them.

Feeling pity on the Garou, and because they had proven their fidelity to Gaia, Luna chose from among them the alphas and betas of all the packs, and bestowed upon them the Touch of Silver. Her breath stirred their fur and her moonglow ignited it, creating a lamp in the darkness, a fiery beacon to all other Garou. These were the rightful chosen, Those Who Lead.

But she whispered to them the conditions of her spell: that they would rule only so long as they were righteous, and even then, each of them would rule for no more than seven years, after which they must step down and allow another to rule in their stead — or else gloriously die in battle.

"Whoa, hold on there," Albrecht said. "That doesn't explain the other Changing Breeds. If only Wolf made the sacrifice to teach humans, how come other animals have changing races also?"

"This is not their tale," Lord Byeli said. "It does not concern them. However, you are not the first to raise such a question. I suspect there is a tale that explains it, but it has been lost. Perhaps Gaia, in Her anger at the other animals for refusing to help humans as She asked, cursed some of their children to become partly human. In this way, the Garou were not alone, although only the Garou have the right to lead others, for only they had earned that right."

Albrecht shrugged. "Whatever. It's interesting and all, but these stories are so... archaic. They're like fairy tales: they've got some truth in them, but it's hard to tell what. Things certainly didn't happen the way they said they did."

"Oh?" Lord Byeli said. "And how are they wrong? Can you say with surety that the world was not different long ago? Science and its speculations, based largely on bones and carbon inform the modern worldview. But not one scientist living today saw these events. Our ancestors, however, did, and they tell us these stories are true. Their spirits confirm these tales whenever they are called."

"If that's so," Albrecht said, "how come so many stories differ? They can't all be true."

"And why not?" Lord Byeli said. "Could not different stories have taken place in different lands, each with its own spiritual rules? Why must Gaia's creation be uniform and true everywhere? There are different degrees of Wyld, Weaver and Wyrm in all aspects of Her creation. Why not different laws or physics for different places, all within the same era?"

"Pretty postmodern of you," Albrecht said. "I'm willing to accept that, spiritually speaking, things happened differently in the Umbra in those days, and maybe bled over to the material world a lot more."

"Bled over? But my lord, there was no Gauntlet in those days. There was no barrier between physical and spiritual — each partook of the other in varying degrees. Those spirits that gained too much matter became the stones, mountains, trees and rivers we know today. Those that gained too much spirit had no children in the material world, and so their kind is unknown except in legend and fable."

"Alright, enough metaphysics. What about this ban Luna put on the Fangs? Seven years? Hardly seems like enough time."

"Indeed. And yet, it made perfect sense from one perspective, for it represented a lifetime... for a wolf. But Garou lived the span of a human, which was much longer. It was a crippling ban when measured in human years. The kings were not content to accept it, and so they sought an ally whose power could circumvent it...."

The Sun's Decree

For many years, the Fangs accepted Luna's ban and ruled the Garou for only seven years each. Elaborate rites developed for the many ways in which a seventh-year king could be deposed on the dawn of his eighth year. Some were challenges to combat, others trials of gamecraft. Those kings capable of winning these challenges were allowed to stretch their rule for one more moon cycle, after which, the challenges would come again. In this way, some truly great kings were able to reign for more than the allotted seven years.

The time came, however, when even this would end. The Wyrm had grown strong and sent many monsters across many lands. The Fangs were sorely tested leading many Garou packs against them, sometimes traveling far to strange places from which they could not easily return.

Remember, in this era, there were still no tribes. There were the Garou and there were their leaders, the

Silver Fangs, those who had been Touched by Luna to lead. These far travels the packs undertook spread the Garou wide across the land. Many of the battles resulted in the deaths of the leaders — who were then always in the forefront, rarely leading from behind — leaving the packs with no Moon-ordained alphas.

Some of the pack members who took leadership in the Fangs' stead were worthy of the duty, but others were not. It was a tragic time. From this vacuum of leadership, the other tribes were created. Who can blame them? They had to survive on their own in foreign lands, far from the Mother Country, with no new Silver Fangs to replace their fallen leaders. Even the best among them soon grew to believe that their new leaders were better than the Fangs. Of course, this was because they were more cowardly, and avoided fighting the Wyrm creatures that crawled the Earth. Hence, their packmates tended to survive longer, even if they could not see the true cost their cowardly tactics levied on the world.

But they convinced themselves that they were more successful, that they didn't need the Fangs. The lowest of them all were the Shadow Lords, who confused leadership with cunning. Those who proved most capable of lying to their brethren, and so prolonging their leadership, were deemed most worthy of all.

So, these other tribes, some of them now resentful of the Fangs, swayed by the honeyed words of cowards, did not throw down their rulers after seven years. Capable of sustaining rule for longer times, these tribes did indeed have an advantage over the Fangs.

While this went on, the Wyrm grew stronger, for there were fewer Garou willing to prune its weed-like growths wherever they appeared. Eventually, these weeds grew into mighty stalks that none could fell.

The Beast-of-War itself walked openly across the Earth, and the other tribes cringed from it. Not all of them, mind you; the Get of Fenris boldly sallied forth against it, as did the Black Furies and Red Talons. But their leaders, although courageous, were not as wise or honorable as the Silver Fangs. They had victories, but many more defeats.

The Silver Fangs risked the safety of their own homelands to send emissaries forth, leaders to take over the runtling packs of other tribes and lead them to proper victory. It was a success, and the other tribes bowed low and bared their necks to the Fangs in submission, recognizing the White Lords' true role among the Garou.

But the cost was terrible. While their numbers were low in the Mother Country, the Beast-of-War struck. It tore across the land, destroying swaths of forest in its path. Even today, the tundra refuses to grow as many trees as once it did. The Silver Fangs rallied what forces they could, but with their numbers weak, they could not long prevail.

There was at that time a mighty leader among them, the greatest of Silver Fangs yet, Arak Mammoth-Bold. It was his reluctant ruling to send forth members of his kind to lead others in far places, weakening his own forces. As fate had it, he was at the end of his seven-year rule. None among his brethren, however, were fit to face this most terrible of tests, to turn back the Beast-of-War. And all knew it. None would challenge him, for none wanted to lose his leadership in this most dire of times.

He resolved to continue his reign, and so raised his stone sword, bound with three war spirits, and led his pack forth, to confront the Beast itself. As they approached the battlefield, open tundra where the Beast had paused in its march, the sun rose on the horizon. Before the night's gloom had fully departed, however, a blue glow descended from the sky, from the region in which the moon had gone to sleep, her night's duty complete. A Lune appeared before the war party and addressed the king.

"Remember Luna's ban, oh king of the Silver Fangs," it said. "You must step down and let another assume your post."

Arak growled in rage and thrust his claws at the meddlesome Lune, but it disappeared as the light of day shone through it. He ordered his pack onwards, but they hesitated. They feared to break Luna's decree, now that her spirit servant had come to remind them of it.

Arak saw that, without their full consent, the battle would go badly for them. His sharp eye then caught a movement in the sky above. It was a falcon, wheeling above them in an ever-widening circle, greeting the Sun, his Celestine lord.

"Ho!" Arak called to it. "Lord Falcon! How is that you rule the skies every morning with none to question your role or to depose it after seven years?"

The falcon wheeled downwards and lit onto a nearby branch, regarding Arak with a regal curiosity. "I rule the sky by the will of my liege, Helios, Emperor of the Day and Lord of Light. His rule is eternal and unchanging. Although he denies his grace to the world for a number of hours so that night may come, he does so only because Gaia has asked it of him. He is a gracious and merciful ruler."

"And how does one gain his fealty?" Arak said.

Falcon bent his head, more curious now. "He cannot be approached by mortals, for his fire is too hot and would burn them to cinders ere they even entered his palace. You must reach him through one of his own,

a lordling such as I. But why do you ask this, wolf-changer? Your Lady is Luna. By her grace do you shift shapes and deliver your anger against your foes."

"Our Lady is fickle and irrational," Arak said. His packmates sucked in their breaths to hear him say such a blasphemous thing, but he continued. "She allows us to rule, but only for seven years each. And yet, the other tribes, who do not even bear her Touch, may rule as long as they can hold their thrones. And humans live still longer, giving their rule even to their blood progeny."

"Humans do so only by dint of Helios' grace," the falcon said. "They appeal to my lord through prayer, and at times, he responds. It is his wish that their rulers be consistent and unchanging. Although he cannot take death away from them, he can ordain their continued rule by familial lineage."

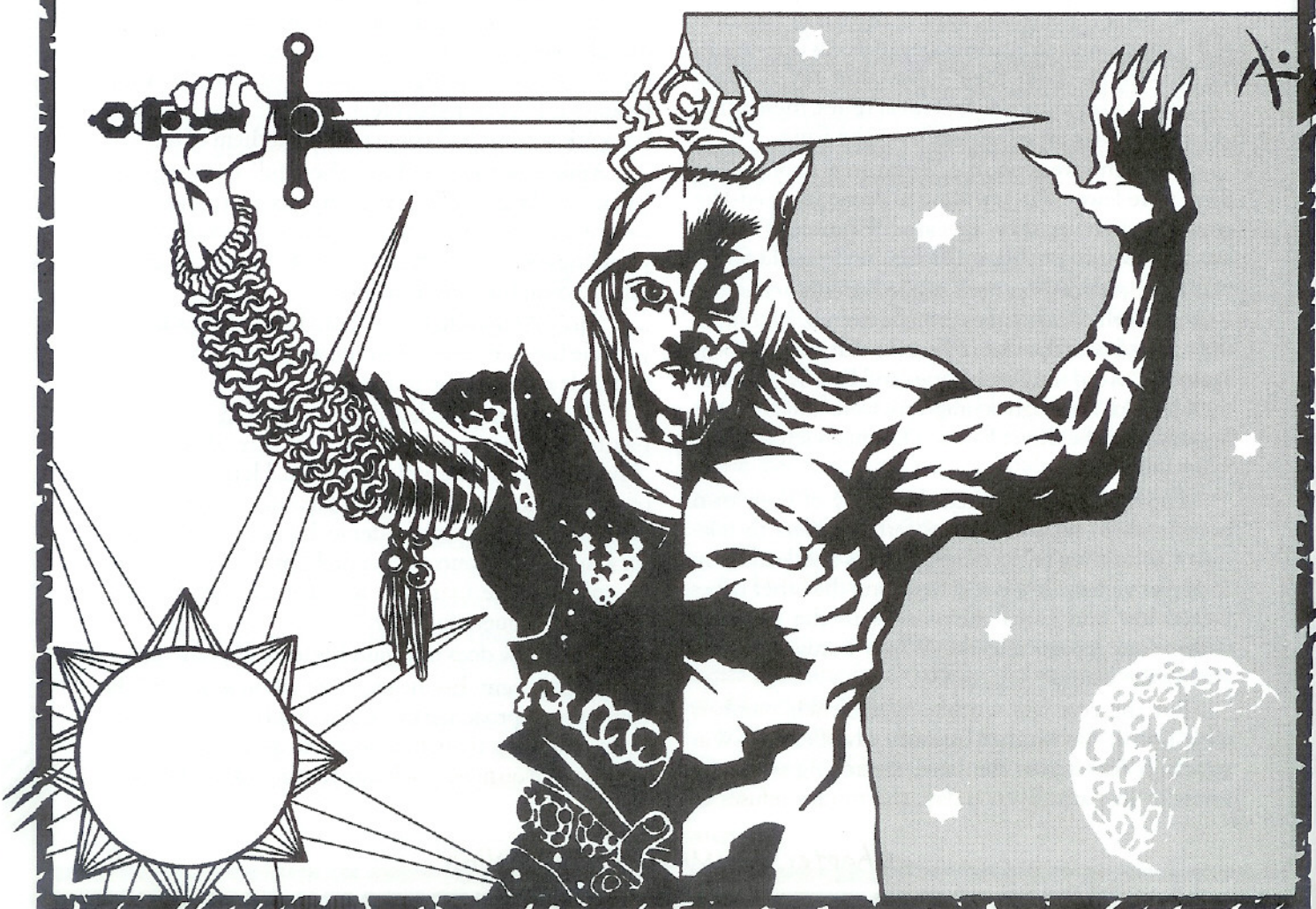
"If I swore my fealty and that of all my tribe to you, oh falcon, would your Lord then grant me the same? Long rule?"

The falcon was silent for a time, as if pondering the ramifications of such a request. His feathers then began to glow, as if lit from within, and his eyes grew sharp. The Garou all stared intently at him, for they knew that he was no longer just a falcon, but had become inhabited by *the* Falcon, the Animal Elder of that race. It spoke: "You are wise, wolf-changer king. None before has thought to do this thing. Helios would not deign to intrude upon Luna's realm unasked, but since you have asked it, I shall grant it. If you swear your tribe's fealty to me and mine, then through me, Helios shall ordain your kingship for so long as you live. But my Lord cannot undo what you are: You must still follow the laws set forth among your kind. If one of your own should challenge your rule, by your own laws for such things, then, should he win, he shall be rightful king thereafter, until he in turn is challenged. But by my Lord's decree, no such challenge will henceforth be required after seven years of rule."

"Then I swear it," Arak said. "I pledge my spirit and that of my tribe to thee, great and honorable Falcon, that you might spare us now from the fickle law of Luna and allow me to lead my kind against the Wyrm."

"It is done!" Falcon cried and spread his wings, launching himself into the air. He circled above them, wider and wider, until it seemed that he had drawn a circle of light into the sky, fiery and blazing: Dawn had come.

Arak howled a war cry and charged into the field. His pack and followers also howled, thrilled with the new power their tribe had gained. Nothing could stand in their way now. Boldly they ran toward war.



And so the Silver Fangs adopted a human form of leadership, ordained by the Sun, forsaking their more wolfen form original given to them by Luna. But think not that they forsook Luna herself. No, for they pledged their victories to her, and howled their stories and tales to her every night, that she should not be lonely on her sky vigil. Many stories are told about how they came to rescue her in later years from many a Wyrm foe. Proud she was of her sister's children, now all grown up and standing on their own.

"Hold on there," Albrecht said. "That's fine and all, but what happened with the battle? Did they win?"

"No," Lord Byeli said. "They lost. They wounded the creature, which was, of course, only a manifestation of the Beast-of-War, such that it crawled away and was later easily killed by other Garou; Black Furies, I believe."

"What?! You build up this big moment and that's it. They lost?"

"The battle is not the point, my lord. It was the winning of Falcon's promise and our tribe's pledge to the totem. It is the key to our continued rule of the Garou Nation. We are ordained by both the Sun and the Moon, something no other tribe can declare. Oh, certainly, they all wish to think their totems give them great power, but how do you rule an entire people with the approval of a giant thundercloud, for Gaia's sake? I mean, really. Its power may be daunting at times, I'll grant, but it cannot come close to the awesome might of the Celestines."

"Back up. Rewind. Arak Mammoth-Bold. What happened to him?"

"He died in that battle, but not before leading many sorties against the creature, all expertly planned. He was a master tactician." Lord Byeli paused for a moment, as if gathering his thoughts. "I apologize, my lord. I should have understood your interest better. Arak was a great king, and I understand full well your interest in his fate, as a king yourself. Forgive me. I sometimes know these stories too well, and forget that others recognize in them facets that I often overlook. I apologize also to his spirit, should it still look over our tribe. May he bless you with his wisdom."

"It's still a letdown. I was hoping he'd come through."

"With Garou, it is not so much the matter of death as it is the manner in which they lived their life. All Garou die; it is what they achieve in life that is important. Arak achieved a great thing for our tribe. Without Falcon's blessing and intercession with Helios, it is doubtful we could have survived the leadership challenges of the other tribes, whose leaders could rule many more years than we were allowed."

"Why not just ignore Luna's ruling? What would she have done?"

"I do not know what her reaction would have been, but the other tribes would know, and our claim to sacred kingship would have been ignored. We would not today have lordship over the others — no matter how little it is recognized — without such a sacred pact. It is what makes us different, higher than the others. We remember such things, even if too many of them forget."

Lord Byeli stood up. "We have spoken enough today. It is now your time to see to the doings of your kingdom, and to ponder what was said. Tonight, Nightmane shall meet with you here and tell her side of the tale."

Albrecht simply nodded and waited for Lord Byeli to leave. He then stood and up and stretched, thinking about what he heard. He shook his head skeptically and headed to the mansion.

That evening, after moonrise, he returned to the throne. Nightmane waited there for him, in a black robe embroidered with silver moons. He smiled and motioned for her to sit in the wooden chair, which she did, after bowing to him.

He sat on the throne. "Well, what do you have to add to Byeli's tale?"

"I spoke with him," Nightmane said, "and he informed me of the stories he told you. I suspect that he did not tell you everything about them."

"Oh? What did he leave out?"

"He left nothing intentionally unsaid. But he does not know the secret I am prepared to give you, if you would have it."

"Is this the one you warned me about? The 'most terrible' of all?"

Nightmane watched the king in silence for a moment, before answering. "It is. You will not be so casual once you have learned it. Be sure you wish to bear its weight before I impart it to you."

"You people... so damn dramatic. Okay, I'm ready for it. What is it?"

"It is the Secret of Kingship."

The Secret of Kingship

The pact the Silver Fangs had made with Falcon helped them to prosper as never before. But Lord Byeli did not tell the complete story about Luna's reaction to this pact. Certainly, her approval was eventually won, in many ways. But her first reaction was to feel bitter betrayal.

Luna shows us many faces. It is hard for her to hide emotion. Once she feels an emotion, she feels it fully, more possessed by it than we mortals can imagine. Once the feeling passes, she leaves it behind her, as if it never happened. She is indeed fickle, and impossible to define. What few among our kind recognize about her is that these sloughed off emotions do not go away; they attain a life of their own, if they are strong enough, and unresolved.

Yes, Luna quickly overcame her anger at the Silver Fang's pledge to Falcon and Helios. Does not Helios

provide the very light that she captures and projects into the world at night, alchemically transfigured by her strange essence? She cannot hate those who serve the Sun, although she can be jealous or angry with them at times.

But not all of her overcame the betrayal. Her bitterness became a being of its own, although not in the way we understand spirit births. It is not separate from her — it *is* her, and yet, it is not. It is one of her faces, although not one that is ever visible in her cycles. If you meet Luna, she may be graceful and beautiful, while when next you meet her, she is wicked and harsh, and then humorous and flighty the next. She has many aspects, not all of them old — the victories and tragedies of her children often create new aspects, some short-lived, others eternal.

Her bitterness is of the latter: long lasting and unresolved. She was wrathful at the news of the tribe's pledge to Falcon, and refused to succor the Silver Fangs after that. No Moon Bridge would open for them, no Moon Path lead true.

To appease her, the Silver Fangs created the Lodge of the Moon. It was the initial mission of the Lodge to win back the love of Luna, to gain her forgiveness for their allegiance to Helios. Not all the Fangs agreed that such groveling was necessary; they felt Luna should accept what had happened and still support them, out of duty to her sister, Gaia. These Fangs formed the Lodge of the Sun in response, to reaffirm their new pact with Helios.

For a long time, the two Lodges resented each other. Only the counsel of kings kept them from tearing each other's throats out. Their duty was to the tribe as a whole, and to report to the king and act at his behest.

The Moon Lodgers spent many long years questing to win back the heart of Luna. Their stories are frightening and tragic, but also instructive and ultimately victorious, for their sacrifices eventually did win her back, and she once again accepted the Silver Fangs and gave to them her gifts.

But the Betrayed Moon did not forgive. This aspect of Luna refused to accept the Fangs' entreaties, and reinforced the Moon's original spell: those Silver Fangs who ruled past their allotted seven-year time would suffer her curse. It would afflict the tribe and poison their ability to rule.

Her curse was madness. Insanity, lunacy, derangement.

All these things are delivered unto us by our betrayal of the Moon, by her scorned pride at our faithless act. Few are the kings who can escape it entirely, although many have circumvented it in clever ways or through the constant, tireless intervention of Falcon. Seven years, my lord. You have seven years in which you may reign before the Betrayed Moon's curse descends on you. Then you will slowly go mad, as so many kings before you have.

"Bullshit!" Albrecht said, standing up and slamming his hands onto the arms of the throne. "I'm not going to buy into that! I swore that I would never become like Morningkill, and I'm not going to let some spooky ancestor tale convince me that I am."

"Believe what you will, my lord," Nightmane said. "I speak the truth, a secret our Lodge has kept hidden for centuries, revealing it only to select kings whom we believed were capable of overcoming the curse, of perhaps even ridding us of it forever."

Albrecht grew quiet and stared at Nightmane. "Me? Why do you think I can avoid this 'terrible and mighty' fate?"

"You wear the Silver Crown. You were tempered by humility in exile from the tribe. Your packmates are not even Silver Fangs. You have worked hard to unite the tribes, not through solar decree, but through trust and example. These qualities are respected by Luna. She clearly favors you."

"Yeah? I thought this Betrayed Moon aspect was sort of separate from Luna?"

"It is. And it isn't. The more aspects of the Moon that favor you, the more they outweigh their bitter sister self. And there is the Crown — forged from moonbeams but wrought by Falcon's brood. It is a mighty artifact that unites both Lodges of the tribe, representing the accord between the Sun and Moon."

"So let me get this straight: You're telling me that the madness our tribe suffers from — the afflictions the other tribes accuse us of — are not personal character flaws or taints in the bloodline, but an actual curse from a forgotten aspect of the Moon?"

Nightmane nodded.

"And if this is the case, why hasn't anyone done anything about it before?"

"For one, it is a terrible shame. Imagine what this would do to our tribe's standing among the other tribes? They barely respect us now, and do so only because of our heritage. If that heritage were to come under question.... Not to mention the sheer anger and hate they would bear us if they knew us to be accursed by Luna."

"An aspect of Luna, right? Not Luna herself."

"Yes, and again, no. It is different, and yet the same."

"But we'd be run out of town regardless, right?"

Nightmane simply nodded.

"If this Betrayed Moon were so powerful, how come our tribe hasn't completely succumbed yet? What's keeping us all from becoming a bunch of gibbering idiots?"

"Because we are strong, my lord. We are Silver Fangs, and we do not bend easily no matter the pressure brought to bear. And our spirit allies aid us to circumvent the Betrayed Moon's power. Falcon constantly tests us and renews our purpose. We rule under his wing. His brood searches for quests and trials that will protect us from the Moon's anger, and so prolong our time without the curse.

"Falcon did so when he chose you. I have heard the tales. You were despondent, exiled from the tribe, but Falcon still intervened to bring you back. This was not only for you, but also for the tribe. He knew that you had a better chance than most of avoiding the curse, or at least staving it off longer than others. Clearly, Arkady, even though he was never king, succumbed to it." She bowed her head in sorrow.

"So what now?" Albrecht said. "How the hell do I continue pretending things are normal after you've unloaded this on me?"

"I tried to warn you of its weight. You must never reveal it to another, except for a king you deem worthy of it. Not even Lord Byeli may know it — especially not Byeli, for he is a Sun Lodger. Many Moon Lodgers have died to keep the Secret of Kingship from others, to protect the Silver Fang lineage and hereditary rights of leadership. Perhaps, now that you know it, you can see a way to overcome it, to win back the cold and distant heart of the Betrayed Moon. It is said that even an aspect of Luna as long-lived as this one can be dispersed, changed, metamorphosed into another aspect, perhaps its opposite: devotion."

Albrecht said nothing. He stared into the sky, at the moon, in its waxing half moon phase. Nightmane stood.

"I shall go now. There is no more to comment upon tonight. Tomorrow, Lord Byeli will have new tales for you, and I shall add what I can to them that night." She waited for Albrecht to dismiss her.

Eventually, he waved his hand at her, a distracted gesture. She shifted into her wolf form and padded away, across the field and into the woods. Albrecht kept staring into the night sky, his thoughts his own.

Impergium

And so we begin again, my lord. Today, on this bright morning, I shall discuss a not-so-bright topic: the Impergium and our role in it.

We were foremost in leading the attempt to cull humanity of its excessive numbers, and to chase them from their cities so they could once again roam the land, living on it and by its graceful bounty, rather than taking from it. King Rests-the-Moon declared the Hunt, after seeking Gaia's wisdom. The other tribes, for the most part, whole-heartedly agreed. This was their long awaited moment, allowing them to finally wreak vengeance for all the slights humans had delivered onto them over the years.

In our zeal to return balance to the world, we completely missed the signs of imbalance that took place in the Umbra. In far Realms, many of them as yet undiscovered by our kind, spirits responded to the savagery we delivered unto the humans. Some grew hungry to experience it, and they slithered forth from their hidden holes to possess humans, exulting in the death of their hosts under our claws, empowered by it. Others abhorred it, and took wing to cry out the injustice to whoever had ears to hear. The Children of Gaia and the Stargazers heard, and gave voice to these concerns in moots.

The Uktena, Croatan and Wendigo had always been closer to their human kind than other tribes. To their credit, they kept their Kin in balance, holding strong to the old ways, spurning the Weaver's gifts. Disgusted at the slaughter we initiated, they took their people and left. Heading east, they were delivered by a bridge to a whole new land. Did this land exist before they quested for it, or did Gaia build it for them? They claim the latter. It was no concern of ours, however, for we cared not that they left, and knew not where they had gone for many, many centuries. They had always been critical of our rule, anyway. If they felt they could do better, then let them try. We believed they would soon return, tails between their legs, hungry and forlorn. That they did not angered some of us, but there were more pressing concerns than runaway cubs.

You see, the Weaver had woven her webs tightly around humans. Their fates were stitched to her, and anything that befell them, was felt by her, for her webs stretched far into distant regions of the Umbra, and their vibrating sent shocks through those regions as the humans they were tied to fell to our fangs.

The Weaver was already mad, although perhaps not as crazed as she would later become. But think of the effect of a thousand webs jangling and shaking as one, and then snapping and falling. Such was the result when we killed so many of her chosen; we unknowingly cut the webs that bound them.

Unfortunately, these webs also served to tie certain spirits down. Human minds dreamed many strange things, and some of these were given birth to as spirits in the Deep Umbra. To keep them in their places, the Weaver wove wards and barriers between them and the minds that had created them, but she did not sever the cords that kept them connected, and so these things still gained life from human dreams.

What were these things? The Glass Walkers could surely tell you more about them, if they were forced to divulge their secrets. They were the earliest spirits of technology, ephemera created not from raw nature, but from human minds. We know and recognize them today as the spirits of trains, cars, guns and even

computers. Back then, they were perhaps spirits of bows and arrows, wagons and cities. However, most of them had yet to influence the material world and find expression there. In other words, these actual wagons and cities had yet to be invented. For now, they were mere dreams, distant, barred from the material world by the Weaver's wards.

Imagine a cord tightly bound around a human, and that it stretches, taut, into the distance, to another being — a spirit — in the Deep Umbra. Now, yank that cord and what happens? One or the other is drawn toward the place where you exert your tugging. In this case, it was often enough to yank the spirits from the Deep Umbra into the Near Umbra, pulling them through the Weaver's wards. Like a spider web breached by a bumblebee, the wards disintegrated, blown on the Umbral winds. The spirits of human invention were free to enter the Near Umbra and find their way to the material world, tracing the threads that connected them to their dreamers.

I am sure you are wondering why this is important in the context of the Impergium. Most tales of this time tell us our mistake was tactical, that we killed too many humans and put too great a fear in them. This is surely true, but it was also spiritual: our actions had ecological effects throughout the Umbra that we couldn't begin to understand.

At first, only the Stargazers realized what was happening, for they were always wary of the Weaver. They tried to warn us and the other tribes, but we did not heed them, mistaking their esoteric speech for weak talk of peace.

Only when Falcon intervened did we finally listen. The spirit world was growing chaotic; these new human-created spirits were overturning ancient pacts and invading territories long established. A great moot was held by the Celestines, and Falcon was sent to convey their ruling: the Impergium must end. Finally, all the tribes convened in Pangaea, stripped of their tribal differences, to listen to the Celestines' decree. The Silver Fangs respected that ruling and declared the Hunt over. No more would Garou hunt humans *en masse*.

Many today grumble that it was the end of the Impergium that ruined everything: humans now grew rampant and unstoppable, more tied to the Weaver than ever before. Few of the other tribes remember the truth behind this: that the Impergium loosed human dreams on the world. Whereas before, these idea spirits were bound beyond the worlds, destined to remain mere dreams, forgotten upon waking, they now invaded the Umbra and possessed their human dreamers, driving them to achieve in material reality the things they had before been content to merely imagine. Soon enough, humans were settling down to grow their food rather than hunt it, building cities to house their now-codified castes and classes, and imagining new Weaver tools with which to conquer the world.

Do we take full blame for the Impergium? By no means. Other tribes say that we were too tainted by our pact with Helios, that we had become too enamored of the Sun's conquering nature. Nonsense. Most of the tribes who levy this action were far more involved in the actual hunting than we. They were the ones who begged us for the right to hunt humans. They cannot now claim innocence when we gave them what they wanted.

Leaving the Mother Country

One of the sad results of the end of the Impergium was our tribe's decision to no longer rule from our homeland alone. We sent new emissaries out to lead other packs. It was clear that, without a strong presence from our tribe, the other tribes would continue to involve us in their troubles, disrupting the balance of the material and spiritual worlds.

And so whole packs were chosen to go forth, leaving the Mother Country, to enter the territories of other tribes and claim a portion for themselves. Of course, the other tribes resisted us at first, sometimes with fierce battles and no quarter. But others would just as often aid us, granting us good land without a fight, and helping us to secure territory in another tribe's regions. In this way, we gained footholds in Western Europe, the Mediterranean and the Middle East.

Following the Impergium, we knew that humans had to be watched more closely than ever before. Not just watched, but ruled. Like the first wolf teachers, we knew that we had to walk among them in their shapes, and never let them know that Garou lived beside them. Most humans believed werewolves lived only in the wilds, and that the cities were poison to them. What's more, they believed we only came out at night, under the moon. They mistook our preferences for our limitations. We used these superstitions against them.

The Silver Fangs declared that the royal bloodlines among humans everywhere belonged to them, that only they could breed with chieftains and kings. The other tribes would have to be content with the lesser classes. This rule was heeded, but only to a degree. In those places where Silver Fangs had not yet gone, the other tribes freely broke this rule. As time passed, they would break it even more frequently.

Now the Fangs did not always live in distant caerns, but some lived in and among the humans, trying to rule and guide them to stay with the old ways, rather than adopt the new. Unfortunately, many of our kings became enamored of human ways, and some

engaged in campaigns to build empires from their human Kinfolk's civilizations. But these experiments were still many long ages away. For now, the Silver Fangs spread out from the homeland and chose human Kin to breed with and create royal lines of descent.

As they came to these other lands and began to truly see them for the first time, after living among them, they suspected a new danger lurking among them — but not among the Garou. It would be a number of years before it could be rooted out, but the problem was soon laid bare: the perfidy of the other shapechanging races.

War of Rage

As you will recall, none of the other animals in the Ancient Days would heed Gaia's calls to duty, but for Wolf. The shapechanging progeny of these animals were just as selfish and shortsighted. They went about what they believed to be their business, scornful of the Garou. In many times and places, they attempted to prevent the Garou from doing their duty to maintain the world in balance. During the Impergium, they even raised claws or wings against us when we culled their Kinfolk herds. Such effrontery can be forgiven, but not their betrayal of Gaia Herself. They chose to spurn the natural world and ally with the new spirits born from the dreams of humans.

The Bastet were perhaps the worst traitors, accepting a secret power from certain human wizards that allowed them to create their own spirit Realms apart from others, perceivable only by themselves. In this way, they thought to escape our rule.

The Corax were always fascinated with human tools, and they often stole them to place in their nests. Now, however, they fraternized with the spirits of these tools. Their fealty to the Sun saved them from the worst of our anger, but they still had to be put in their place.

The others had similar crimes, whether they bred with royal human bloodlines reserved for the Silver Fangs or refused to yield territory to them. It was clear that these upstarts had to be dealt with, and placed firmly under our rule.

The War of Rage was felt across the world. Although it was far less devastating in the Americas, its effects in the spirit world bled through and affected even the Pure Lands. We now concede that this war was a terrible mistake, not because it was unwarranted, but because its full effects were far worse than even we had foreseen. It was not merely a war for territory or to conquer, for wherever shapeshifters are involved, spirits are also involved. The entire spirit world was embroiled in the conflict, forced to choose sides. Most chose our side, of course, knowing that we would be ultimately victorious. But many did so out of fear rather than choice, and that has tainted many of our relations with these spirits ever since.

Certain spirits aided the Fera in their fight, seeing it as a struggle for liberty against our oppression. The underclasses have always been quick to claim lofty ideals to defend their crimes. Regardless of who was right and who was wrong, the battles were terrible. It could not continue.

This time, we needed no Celestine counsel to tell us the proper course of action. We could see clearly the devastation wrought and the friendships destroyed. We declared and end to the war and a truce with our enemies. Other tribes like to claim the initiative in this, and certainly, tribes such as the Children of Gaia had been a voice against the war all along, but it was not their decision to end the war. It was ours.

We sought to ameliorate the wounds by defining territories and breeding herds, and some of these were accepted, even though the Fera usually got the worst of the lands and stock. In some places, these offers were refused, with the inevitable result being that the Fera had to migrate elsewhere, to lands Garou tribes showed little interest in. The world was wide and vast then — larger, I believe, than it is now, and I do not mean metaphorically — so there were many lands they could move into, places where humans had not yet erected cities that required our vigilance.

And so peace was returned. We ruled the Mother Land and many other lands where humans had spread, and left the hinterlands to the other tribes and the Fera. Some complain even today about this, but were we not giving them the best territories, places still prime with Gaian bounty? We made the sacrifice to stay near the cities, close to humans and their daily depredations, forsaking the wild places our hearts yet yearned for. We kept some caerns, certainly, but did not make new ones in the wilds.

All this bounty was granted to others, and yet still they whined like hungry pups seeking more scraps. Eventually, we shut our ears to their selfish chorus and set about ruling by our own counsel, with little heed to the petty whimpers of our pampered brethren.

Albrecht nodded and crinkled his brow. "Look, I've been patient and respectful and all, but... this is a lot like the kind of bullshit I've heard for years, about how we can do no wrong, and it's always the other guys' fault that things went bad. Do we have a congenital defect, a complete inability to 'fess up to our mistakes?"

Lord Byeli grunted in consternation, frowning. "I don't understand. Where were we at fault? In choosing to bear our burden, no matter the cost to our popularity? None

could have possibly ruled more wisely in such troubled times, given what little information we had then. It is always easy to look back and see one's faults; it is not so easy to look forward to predict them."

"You're kidding me, right? The War of Rage was justified, even if it did step over the bounds a bit? It was genocide. Us versus them, because we didn't like the way they looked at us, or got insulted when they didn't do everything we said."

Lord Byeli's eyes sparked with anger and he let loose a low growl, clearly holding back his rage. "You were not there, oh king. You did not make those decisions. Our ancestors did. For too long they have been blamed for only the bad that came of things, never praised for the good. But were it not for their sacrifices, no one today would remember the bad, for no one today would be alive to whine about it. Should we have let the Fera burn the forest down because it is cruel to stop children from their play, no matter the consequences? Should we have let humans run rampant over all the other animals? Nobody ever thinks to look to their plight. Ask whether the Woolly Mammoth forgives us the Impergium. Ask the saber-toothed tiger and the cave bear if they're glad we never stood up against humans. I think you'll find the answer: 'Where were you before then?' they cry. 'Where were you when they hunted us to extinction?'"

Albrecht didn't respond. He kept his mouth clamped shut, more to hide his grinding teeth than out of deference. He finally said: "I think we're done for today."

Lord Byeli stood up, bowed, and returned to the mansion. Albrecht got up and walked across the large, open field, roaming aimlessly, thinking about the lessons of history.

That evening, he returned to the throne, where Nightmane waited for him, already seated. She did not endlessly repeat the formalities of the first night; Albrecht forbade her doing so.

"Did Byeli fill you in?" Albrecht said. "We ended with the War of Rage."

"He did," Nightmane said, looking strangely at Albrecht. "Of course, once again, he did not tell you the full tale, for he does not know it."

"I suspected as much. Go ahead. Let's hear it."

Conquest Dementia

Most Silver Fangs know the tale of how King Rests-the-Moon heard the counsel of Gaia, bidding him to loose predators upon humanity, for the sacred balance had to be maintained. What most do not know, and what those few among us who know the Secret of Kingship have come to believe, is that Rests-the-Moon did not hear from Gaia at all, but only believed that he had. He is described as among the greatest of kings, and was well respected. But he was long into his reign when he heard Gaia's words. He had served far more than seven years as ruler.

We call him the first of the Moon-thralls, the first king to suffer the curse of the Betrayed Moon. He heard his own twisted mind whispering to him, bidding him create the holy war the Impergium would become.

Of course, he did so with the full backing of many spirits, for they truly wished humans to be put in their place. Even Helios agreed with the initial goals of the Impergium. It was only when it began to unravel the delicate ecological balance of the spirit world that the Celestines gathered their council and sent Falcon forth to cool the madness of the Silver Fang kings, for the kings had inherited the dementia of Rests-the-Moon.

I believe that the Stargazers suspected then that our kind was mad, but we overcame it. Did we not heed Falcon and halt the Hunt? That appeased them. For now. Luckily for us, they kept such musings to themselves and did not spread them among the tribes.

The War of Rage was another such madness. We know not the name of the king or queen who began it, but we suspect they hailed from one of the Lost Houses, the two who died out during these times. Many have spent their lives to discover more about these houses, whose names are lost to us, and some have come to believe that one of them was brought low by the perfidy the Fera, the other Changing Breeds. This was the Ice Pack, most of whose members were lupus. For many years, it was believed that they diminished through lack of breeding partners. Not so.

Perhaps they encroached too far into the territory of these changers — which ones, we know not. Gurahl? Bastet? Regardless, they fought a terrible battle against the changers, with the result being the loss of most of their septs. Perhaps it was this that caused the leader of the other Lost House to declare the war.

We Moon Lodgers who know the Secret of Kingship — and know that not all Moon Lodgers are privy to it — believe that both houses were lost to madness. They were led by the Moon-thralls. The lupus house decided to hunt the Fera, and so was hunted in return. The other house decided to embroil the entire Garou Nation in its act of revenge, justified or not.

Today, the Ice Pack is revered as the most pure, untouched by the madness of the War of Rage, paragons of innocence. I believe many Garou yearn to return to the Eden of the lupus mind, and the Ice Pack represents that dream for them.

That both houses became lost is a sign of punishment for our tribe. Did White Heart tell you that the Silver Fangs chose to end the war on their own? It is true. A nameless king or queen knew the price of madness, and so used their power to end it before it

devoured us all. Some legends say that this ruler relinquished the throne, voluntarily stepping down. Perhaps they remembered the seven-year law, and heeded it, bringing our tribe back into accord with the Betrayed Moon. For a time, at least.

"You know," Albrecht said. "That makes a lot more sense to me. I haven't decided whether to believe what you told me last night, but it's the first thing I've heard that explains the whole Impergium and War of Rage crap to me. It doesn't explain why all the Garou jumped right in with us, but it does at least provide a plausible kick-start. 'Course, I'm likely to find any excuse to criticize our leaders. I'm not a typical king that way."

"I find it most refreshing," Nightmane said. "More and more I believe your attitude is most suited to slough off this curse."

"Don't go putting me on a pedestal," Albrecht said. "I haven't done anything to absolve us yet. If — emphasis on if — there is a curse, that is. I'm not sure I buy into that. You seem convinced, but it's always fun to have a secret nobody else knows, right?"

Nightmane bowed her head. "Would that it were not this one, my lord. I would dearly love to be rid of it."

"All right. That's enough for tonight. Unless you have something else to add?"

"No, my lord," Nightmane said, rising from her seat. "Until tomorrow night, then." She bowed and shifted into wolf form, vaulting across the field toward the woods as if glad to be done with her duty.

Albrecht sat alone for a while, his hand idly rubbing the Silver Crown upon his head.

The 13 Houses

Once again, my lord, I greet you on the morn of a new day. Today, I shall speak of the 13 Houses of the Silver Fangs.

Today, only seven of these houses survive; the others have been lost through many years of toil and labor to ensure Gaia's plan in this world. I shall speak of each house in detail later, once we begin our discussion of the customs and ways of the tribe. For now, know that each house began with a mighty ancestor in the Dawn Time. It often took many years for each house to declare itself as such, under the leadership of a descendant of one of the original 13.

For instance, many believe that your house, that of Wyrmfoe, is younger than some of the others. It is indeed younger when dated from their formal declaration and recognition as a house, but its royal lineage extends back much farther, to the 13 Wolves of the Pale Tundra. These were the core alphas of our tribe long, long ago, the ones upon whom Luna bestowed her Touch of Silver. The first Garou ordained as Those Who Lead.

Each Silver Fang traces his lineage back to one of these 13, formalized through their house affiliation. Now, of course, it is unlikely that even we can always trace our heritage over so many years. House membership has become a more fluid, political institution than originally chartered. It is possible for one Silver Fang to relinquish membership in his birth house and be welcomed into another. Possible, but rare.

In the ancient times of which I speak, the houses held more to their blood ties than today. Fierce rivalries developed between houses over which one was more pure than the rest, which of them had kept their breeding most untainted. Perhaps more than any other reason, the Silver Fang exodus from the Mother Lands was initiated by the houses seeking to be rid of one another, setting out to find their own territories to rule, unchecked by whichever house currently held sway in the Mother Country.

It was only after this exodus that the Clan of the Crescent Moon attained its high prominence. They did not leave their homeland, and fought whoever else stayed to control the places of power there. Over time, grievances between houses were forgotten, for distance and time does indeed heal most wounds. Many looked back upon the Mother Country as their spiritual home, and some regretted that their ancestors had left it. In this light, the Crescent Moon was looked upon as the steadfast standard bearer of tradition. It did, indeed, hold the oldest of known caerns, and had access to the legends recorded on its walls. Its new, exalted position was not undeserved.

But its sway over the herds of humanity was weak. The Crescent Moon still held the wilderness and tundra of the Mother Country, and ruled their human Kin mainly from afar. In the rest of the world, where humans were erecting cities and small empires, the other houses gained new forms of prominence.

The Rise and Fall of Empires

Although Silver Fangs bred into royal human bloodlines, they were rarely rulers themselves. They knew well that they had to remain unknown and unrecognized, at least so far as their Garou identities were concerned. Most Fangs chose not the blood of kings, but that of dukes, counts and other lesser nobility. They knew that, in human societies, kings and emperors rarely issued decrees at whim, but were instead swayed by a whole class of nobility and court officials. These were the Kinfolk chosen by the Silver Fang houses.

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Now and then, of course, calamity would cause an unexpected candidate to be made king, and sometimes this resulted in direct rule by Kinfolk or even Silver Fangs themselves. But for the most part, the Fangs kept to the lesser lineages and ensured the status quo where possible, representing the most conservative elements in human societies, ever strident against acts that would further extend the power of the humans over the wild.

Inevitably, we did not do so alone. Other forces worked to sway human leadership. Well known were the vast, timeless plots of the immortal Leeches. We sniffed these out and killed them where we could, but their influence was pervasive and unseen. Surely at times, even our close Kin became their catspaws, unknown to us.

The factor that most prevented our direct rule of humans was the indirect nature of breeding. A human child rarely bred true. Many generations might pass before a Garou was born. Houses were stretched thin keeping their lineage within royalty, but extending it far enough to the least of royalty to ensure a broad enough pool for breeding. If we whelped enough human brats, surely one or two of them would breed true. In some places, we had to stoop to breeding with the upper middle classes, the artisans and merchants even, but we tried to keep such shameful breeding within the wealthy, so that their offspring might one day aspire to nobility. Sometimes they instead led to squalor, and those Silver Fangs unfortunate enough to breed true to such debased lineages are not treated well by our kind. Welcomed and given a place, yes, but not with the most hospitality.

The Silver Fangs participated in the greatest of human civilizations: The Sumerian priest-kings, Egyptian dynasties, Greek tyrants — before the Greeks adopted foolish democracy — and Indian fiefdoms. That all of these forms of rule were ultimately fleeting proves that the Weaver's work is not completely free of the Wyld.

In many times and places, our tribe forgot their true duty: to rule for Gaia, not themselves. Many were drunk on the power they had over humans and other Garou. They had been too long in the palaces near the city and too long away from the wilds. No failure proved this more than Rome.

Inglorious Rome

Rome was a marvel of the ancient world — or a nightmare. Never before had government of so large a territory become so efficient. Our tribe, initially bred into the upper classes of the Republic, was pushed farther and farther from power by the growing might of the military. Too few generals were "ours." The empire did not merely create a hemisphere-spanning civilization — it burned its roads and laws into the spirit world. Roman roads were not merely human constructs, for their power altered the Penumbra, forcing straight lines were before there were curves and waves. Everything became linear.

Amidst this Weaver march, leading the charge in many cases, was House Conquering Claw. They exulted in the military power that was Rome, and enjoyed using it to break the wills of human barbarian nations — usually the Kin of the Get of Fenris or Fianna. Their hubris is not well judged today. Rome fell. They fell. Harano took them after the very barbarians they had subjugated tore down their beloved empire. Their Kin families never regained their prominence, and the remaining Conquering Claw Fangs slowly died of misery, harkening to the days when they helped the emperors to conquer half the world.

Some wish to equate the so-called madness and eccentricities of famed Roman emperors to us, levying their usual slander of insanity upon us. Ridiculous, of course. If the emperors were Conquering Claw Kin — and I cannot say for sure whether they were or not — their madness was not due to blood relation but to Weaver and Wyrm taint. By this point, the Wyrm was tainting everything the Weaver touched, and all too often, our kind could not see its taint, for it often lay within the breasts of humans who wielded power.

Medieval Kings

With the fall of Rome, it appeared that, perhaps, a golden age could again return. Humans were broken and their cultures tattered, clinging to a bare existence without their precious Roman infrastructure. Our kings thrived in this new age. Small fiefdoms were far better fit for ruling humans than empires had been. The lack of constant communication between a central city and its outlying fiefs added to our ability to control the course of human history. For many years, we fomented rivalries among human cultures, to keep them in their places, fearful of one another. Humans born to a village grew old and died in that village, often without ever leaving its environs. This was as it should be.

Inevitably, however, humans grew once more, and their kingdoms became vast. This time, they had human religions to unify them, religions which cared little for the wilds and focused exclusively on human affairs, with no thought to animals or even spirits, which were all viewed as evil. This is one of the saddest things about humans: they cannot perceive spirits as they are, but only as they think them to be.

Some believe the later Middle Ages were a bad time for us, for we lost ground everywhere, especially as

the Church gained power and the middle classes rose up into their own, mercantile-based power. The Renaissance was a serious blow, a complete overturning of a centuries-old society, giving too much power to the common man and the merchant. This blossomed into the birth of many new technology spirits and physical inventions. Was it time for a new Impergium?

The New World

Eventually, humans built and floated enough boats that they finally discovered the Pure Lands. The lost tribes of the Uktena, Croatan and Wendigo would soon come to know the long defeat we had suffered. And much of it was at our hands.

Silver Fangs saw an untapped land of purity for them to rule, and so followed their Kinfolk there. At first, they established territories where native Garou had already yielded to the incoming humans. Inevitably, however, they saw that the Garou were incapable of defending their caerns from the terrible Wyrm creatures now walking the land. Reluctantly, the Silver Fangs offered their aid to the native Garou, even though it meant stretching their own power thinly across their territories. The natives refused.

When the Deep Blue Sky Caern near New Amsterdam fell to a vicious invasion of Wyrm creatures that crawled up from the Earth — proving they had lain dormant in this land, and had not been brought over by colonists — the Silver Fangs knew they had to act. The natives were incapable of defending these sacred sites.

Leading other tribes, the Fangs spread outward and seized the least-guarded caerns. Unfortunately, due to the native's zeal to defend them against the Garou, many lives were lost on both sides. This allowed the Wyrm to take even more caerns. Its minions would wait until a battle had been decided and then attack the weakened victor, winning the caern for themselves.

Your own house distinguished itself most here, my lord. Wyrmfoe became a true foe of the Wyrm. Its packs refused to rule these caerns, and instead roamed the land, hunting Wyrm creatures. This very caern in which we sit was saved from destruction by their intervention. It was under assault and its Wendigo and Uktena defenders could barely hold out against the force. Wyrmfoe warriors arrived to turn the tide, even though it cost them their leader.

In gratitude for their selfless act, the surviving native Garou willingly yielded the caern to Wyrmfoe's care, without even being asked to do so. They departed for lands to the north, to be among their own kind, for this caern was already deep within white territory now.

Would that all such victories had yielded such fruit. The other tribes marched across the land seizing caerns themselves, not because their owners were not fit defenders, but because they wanted territories of their own. This shameful practice turned more native Garou against us, for they believed this was done in our name. As leaders of the Garou Nation, we felt responsible, and so traveled across the continent to set things straight, apportioning caerns where we could. In many places, disputes could not be resolved, and so we took temporary control of these caerns until peace could again allow for an amicable resolve between native and newcomer.

The Wyrm did not allow us such luxury. The constant state of war it kept us in since our coming prevented us returning many of these caerns, and only our firm and steady rule in these areas has kept them from falling to the Wyrm entirely.

"You have got to be kidding me," Albrecht said. "You don't really believe that bull, do you?"

Lord Byeli looked quizzically at Albrecht. "Again, my lord, I am afraid we have a difference. What I have said is true. If I did not give proper voice to the opinions of other tribes it is because we have heard their voices crying for so long, begging to be given control of caerns they cannot possibly hold, claiming they were wronged when they know as well as we that Gaia gave us claws and thews with which to decide these issues."

"Ah, rule of the schoolyard bully, huh? That's what makes us the most able kings? Our ability to kick others' asses? I agree that we need to do that now and then, but come on here: you've just cited a litany of justification for us doing any damn thing we please."

"And this troubles you why? We are Silver Fangs. We lead. It is what we do. We need no justification to do so, except that given us by the Sun and Moon. Other Garou know this and recognize it, even if they are too weak to abide by it."

"Weak? I'd think their disagreeing with it is a sign of their independence. That takes strength."

"Do not mistake me: Rebellion is good for all, for it keeps us wary and them strong. Their cries of injustice are no surprise — it is their lot, their place in the scheme. It is our place to rule. Why then do we need to heed the inevitable whining that cubs always inflict upon their parents? We should suffer it with dignity, which means giving it no ear."

"Speak for yourself, Lord Byeli. As long as I've got this Crown, I'll give ear to anything I damn well please."

Lord Byeli smiled, a genuine gesture of pleasure. "As it should be, my lord, as it should be. Now, if I may continue, I shall bring our narrative into the present."

The Age of Peasant Rule

Among the terrible consequences of the Renaissance and its scientific "revolution" was the overthrow of monarchies. Humans, emboldened by their new philosophies of humanism and materialism, questioned the rightful rule of monarchs. This led to a return to that Grecian failure: democracy. The rule by the citizenry.

Certainly, republics helped to mitigate this vast empowerment of the common man by allowing the upper classes to limit their voice through representation in senates, but increasingly, parliaments became home to lowest form of human scoundrels. Such thieves and con-men as could never exist in a monarchy rose to prominence, and fleeced their constituents in every way possible, selling them dreams of liberty while delivering the same old forms of slavery, but all without the ennobling sense of duty to a higher power or ruler.

The proper hierarchies of society were overturned, and in their place, the Wyrm arose, speaking tongues of equality but whispering promises of personal power and aggrandizement to each. How can a society long survive that claims to seek equality and yet rewards only ambition? More than ever, humanity needed the guidance of the Silver Fangs.

But we were slow to realize what was taking place. How could we predict that humans would choose scoundrels to rule them again and again? It is as if a wolf pack chose a scapegoat to lead them over the alpha! We refused for too long to extend our breeding stock, and we lost many Kinfolk to Madame Guillotine and to the terrible, Wyrm-inspired madness of Bolshevism. I shudder to imagine noble bloodlines ended with but the yank of a cord or the twitch of a trigger finger, executions committed by commoners or worse. How the fates mock us!

We did, of course, extend our breeding stock. We had to. But we still chose only the best, those that displayed leadership qualities or whose families maintained wealth and privilege no matter the changing tides of fortune. One thing did not change in the new world of democracy: there would always be a privileged class, and it almost always proved to be hereditary. Once a family gained significant advantage over another, especially in wealth, it was not hard to maintain that, for their children were born to more opportunity than those of others, and their children in turn gained the same advantages.

It is impolitic today to refer to the privileged class as such, or to even recognize that their status comes from family lines. It is assumed that any man may pick himself up by his own bootstraps and become President. But of

course he can! Only fools believe the office of the President holds any real power or sway. It is the oligarchs who still rule, the rich elite whose children go to the same schools and offer opportunities to their former classmates once they attain high posts. They would not think of offering these positions to the *hoi polloi*.

So we maintain our ancient privilege and power yet. It is more difficult at times, and we must keep more hidden than ever in the past, but in many ways, it is surprisingly easier. The common populace believes it is led by its own choices, and does not see the invisible aristocracy that rules it. And so we keep our power.

The Mother Country Awakens

Finally, I return to the Mother Country, the land we left so long ago, but which still survives, embattled but still bold. Mighty wars were fought there of late, after many long years of darkness and toil, loss and sorrow. Victory was finally ours. Queen Tamara Tvarivich leads us to a new era of power, one where we may once more rise to prominence among all the tribes. The Mother Country will once more be a beacon to all, an icon of true Garou tenacity and regal resolve.

Our own sept leader, Rustarivich Golden-Paw, bids you welcome, King Albrecht, and hopes that, on your journey to once more make alliance between Houses Crescent Moon and Wyrmfoe, you will first share his hospitality and allow him to be your guide and confidant in the Mother Country.

A new vision grows. The Boyars once more roam the tundra, knights of a golden age dawning, a time of renewal and return. The Final Battle comes, it is said. Our totem, Firebird, kin to Phoenix, sees this. Shadows of the future glow in the sky like the aurora borealis, ever shifting and as yet undetermined. It is we who shall determine them, we who shall cast those shadows. The Apocalypse need not be a time of sorrow, for it can be a moment of victory, a time when we all stand together and destroy the Wyrm and the tragic world it has wrought. From Gaia's womb will come a new world, perhaps one without our kind, but we shall rest forever in spirit, knowing that we stood firm against the Foe, undaunted, leading all other Garou behind our banner.

As long as the Sun and Moon light the day and night, our glory will be remembered.

Lord Byeli bowed low to Albrecht, bending knee to touch the ground. Albrecht looked down on him and then stood up from his throne. He placed his hand on Byeli's head. When he spoke, he recited words written for such moments long ago, part of the many ceremonial invocations required of a Silver Fang king. He didn't place as much importance on them as others, but he knew one such as Byeli needed the affirmation. Ceremony and rite were the lifeblood of such Silver Fangs.

"And so dawn has turned to dusk and the sun soon sets. The Lodge of the Sun has distinguished itself well. Our history has been told, our ancestors named and their deeds recounted. Your duty is near complete, lorekeeper. Go and return on the morning."

Lord Byeli rose and nodded to Albrecht. He seemed flush with pride, whether over Albrecht's ritual gesture or an afterglow from his ode to Russia, Albrecht didn't know. He turned and walked toward the mansion.

Albrecht called over to a page standing guard nearby but out of normal earshot. The page was in human form, to ensure he did not overhear the king's private audience. "Bring me something to eat. I'm eating outside tonight."

The page soon returned with a steak and folding table. He set the table and waited for further orders from Albrecht.

"Go get yourself something to eat," Albrecht said. "I'm okay out here."

He watched the sun go down as he ate, pondering what he'd heard. It wasn't anything he hadn't already figured out for himself, although he disagreed with many of Lord Byeli's opinions on human history.

Soon, a soft grunt came from nearby. Nightmane stood by the roots of the tree in wolf form. Albrecht waved her over.

"So what do you have to add? Does democracy suck for you, too?"

Nightmane shifted into human form, a questioning look on her face. "I do not pay nearly so much attention to human politics as does Byeli. It is the purview of the Sun Lodge." She sat down on the chair.

"Okay, then, what does the Moon Lodge have to add to the sweeping panorama of history I've learned today?"

"I can say little about the history of our rule over others. I can tell you of the spiritual ramifications it had...."

Neither Wolf nor Human

Each Silver Fang house used to have a presiding ancestor spirit. Once, long ago, it was that house's founder, one of the 13 Wolves of the Pale Tundra. Eventually, as is the way of things, these spirits receded deep into the Umbra, and heeded fewer and fewer calls for their wisdom. In their place, great kings and queens of the houses answered summons. But their wisdom was different than that of the founders. They counseled worldly things, for they were still obsessed with their own reigns and the legacies they had left. The original 13 were untainted by such concerns, and so counseled eternal truths. Without their counsel, our tribe fell further into the worldly traps of power, heeding less and less the wisdom of the spirits, espe-

cially those who could not lend their strength or cunning to aid a king's rule.

I believe the lack of the 13's counsel is what worsened our spiral into madness. When the houses first spread out from the Mother Country, it was a good thing. It was as if they had outrun the Betrayed Moon, for it was many, many years before the madness struck any ruler. But eventually, the Moon's avenging shadow reached even into the New World; we could not long escape the curse.

The folly of Rome was partly ours. We reveled in orgies when we should have been culling the Roman military might. We became dilettantes in the Renaissance when we should have been running the merchants out of the city-states, our jaws gnashing at their heels.

Our weakness is our human side. We have too few lupus to remind us of the wolfen ways. Since most of us are raised as humans, we all too often think as humans, not as Garou. But our tribe's strength in the old days was that we, more than any other tribe, thought as Garou. Not human, not wolf, but Garou. The Children of Gaia are too human, the Red Talons too wolfen. We were the perfect balance, those who ruled as both wolf and human. One hand clawed, the other wielding a klaive.

I pray that we can regain what was lost. That our time of travail in Russia has stripped us of the flesh of pretension and folly, and left us only the white skeleton of undaunted will. Perhaps in Russia, and with your alliance, we can again truly claim the birthright that is ours: the divine right of Those Who Lead.

"It's a good dream," Albrecht said, somewhat more wistfully than usual for him. "If we get the chance to prove it. If the world doesn't end before then."

"My lord," Nightmane said. "I have nothing left to say on the matter of history. Tomorrow we will discuss our traditions. But... I would ask a boon, if it please you."

"I've been expecting this. My 'discussion' with the Silver Crown, right?"

Nightmane's face flushed red. "Yes." She looked at Albrecht, catching his eye with a look of pleading urgency. "I must know."

"All right. You've been good. You told me what you think is your greatest secret. I'll tell you what happened. I saw the 13 you talked about, except there were only 12 of them. I don't know whether that's because one of the houses was missing — although I guess six of them should be missing by that count — or whether I was supposed to be the 13th, the representative of Wyrmfoe.

"They led me into a dream, where I challenged an insane king for leadership and won. But, over time, I became just as nuts as he was. Next thing I know, there's

this hotshot young Garou challenging me. And the tribe's egging him on. That was the final straw for me; I threw down the Silver Crown. It wasn't worth that kind of bullshit. That sort of shocked everyone. Including some sort of dragon that was hiding deep in the Earth. It exploded out of the ground and swallowed the Crown.

"I knew I'd fucked up then, so I went in claws first, fangs clamped tight on the thing's torso. It knocked me silly but finally gave up the ghost. I cut its stomach open and retrieved the Crown. But that was it for me, too. The young hotshot came and took the Crown, but that was okay. It seemed right. I didn't have to fight for it anymore; I'd done enough.

"I wake up in this dark, damp chilly cave. There's a bright light coming at me, and I see it's glowing fur, a pure, white wolf, brighter than the full moon. He leads me to this passage back into sunlight. I go through it and feel this incredible breeze blow right through me. I feel more awake then I've ever been, ready to take on the world. I open my eyes, and you know the rest."

Nightmane smiled and looked at Albrecht as if she saw him for the first time. "Boot-tyeh zdarovi. Bless Gaia that she has given us such a world of wonders. You were tested by the Crown, to see if you could avoid the curse of the Betrayed Moon. I believe you passed."

"Yeah? Does that mean I won't go bat-shit freaky any day now? My seven years ended last year, you know."

"I cannot say. I would like to believe that the Crown would protect you, but it did not protect House Winter Snow. Some would say its power was the cause of their curse. I believe, though, that they were cursed ere their king ever wore the Crown."

"Could be, but the Crown can get pretty damn mean to any unworthy applicant who puts it on. I've seen it. King Aaron Everstone, bless his birch-bark heart, must have had enough of the right stuff to pass that test. But, you know... it doesn't really matter. All this ancient history is enlightening — to a degree. We've still got to live in the here and now and deal with the shit that comes down our pike today, and tomorrow. Maybe we can learn from how our elders dealt with this stuff, but it's always different in every generation. I've learned that much. I bet you guys over at the Firebird Sept think I'm some sort of weenie for not ordering the tribes around here to bend over whenever I want them to."

"I would never say such a thing!" Nightmane said.

"Say it, no. But think it? I'll bet you did, at least before you met me. I know the kind of chatter that goes on in the Old World. You guys don't always understand how to rule others without ordering them around. But it's not about getting your way; it's about leading them to the best way for all of us. When they see that, they start to trust you, and then they follow you to hell and back if need be."

"I understand. You speak of the Subtle Court method of leadership."

"The what? There's a name for it?"

"There is a name for every style of leadership imaginable, and a host of ceremonies to accomplish them. We will speak of them in the coming nights. It is late now, and you have much to do beside listen to my lore. If it please you, I will go and leave you to ponder what has been said by those who serve the Sun and Moon."

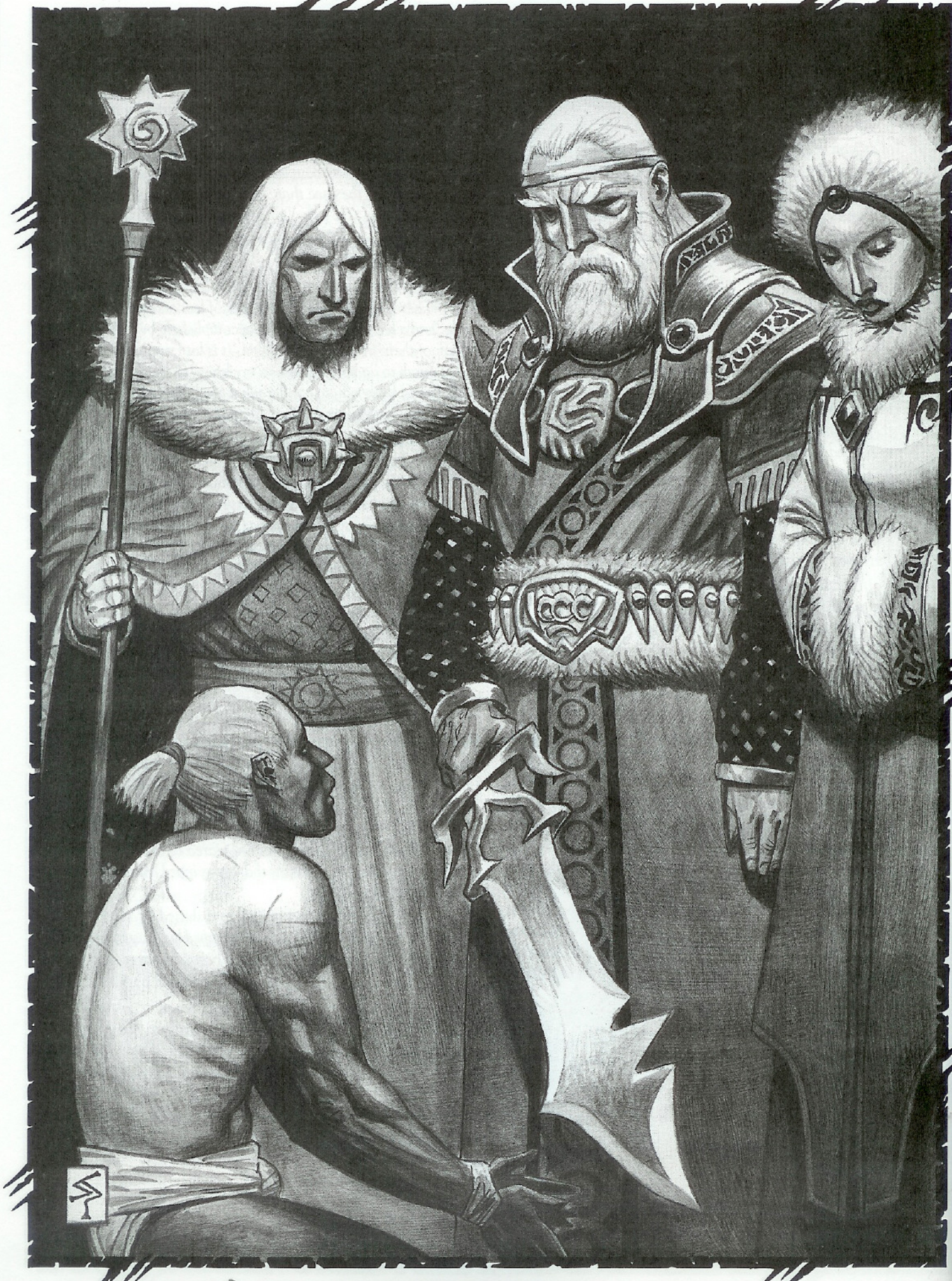
"Okay, you can head out. I got a lot to sort out anyway. See you tomorrow."

Albrecht watched Nightmane once again assume the wolf form and seemingly glide across the nighttime field, into the woods where she preferred to sleep, still safe within the well-patrolled bawn of the caern.

He walked to the rear of the great oak from which the throne was carved and ran his hand on its trunk, tracing upwards from the roots until he found the shape he was looking for. He willed his eyes to shift, to change into wolf pupils, and then looked with his sharper, brighter vision at the line of carvings on the tree. The crests of the previous kings of House Wyrmfoe, those who had ruled here in the North Country before him. The highest on the tree, about level with his chest, was the crest of King Jacob Morningkill, his grandfather. Above it, there were no carvings.

He had hesitated for years to add his crest. He somehow felt he hadn't fully deserved it yet, even though, as he now knew, we had past his requisite seven years. He chuckled to himself. Maybe he also feared to put his name here, worried that the madness that had gripped Morningkill would descend on him.

He shook his head and smiled, and shifted into Crinos form, a pure, white-furred wolf. He tapped his claw into the wood above Morningkill's crest and began to carve.



Chapter Two: Please to See the King

The sense of honor is of so fine and delicate a nature that it is only to be met with in minds which are naturally noble or cultivated by good examples and a refined education.

— Sir Richard Steele

Great men, like great ages, are explosives in which a tremendous force is stored up....

— Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*

Over the next few days, the lectures continued, with Lord Byeli speaking during the day and Nightmane by night. They sought to instruct Albrecht in the customs of the tribe, as believed by the Silver Fangs of the Old Country, who cherished tradition more than those in the New World.

Tribal Structure

Lord Byeli Speaks:

I will begin today, my lord, with the basic structures within our tribe. Every Silver Fang is a member of one of the seven surviving houses. Most Silver Fangs are also expected to choose one of two lodges soon after their Firsting: the Lodge of the Sun or the Lodge of the Moon. A select few Silver Fangs serve as the functionaries of these lodges: shaman, steward and squire. I myself serve as the squire for the Sun Lodge within the Firebird Sept, for it is reserved for Galliards.

Finally, some Silver Fangs, but not all, align themselves with certain camps, each with its own philosophy, goals or politics it wishes to foist on the rest of the tribe.

The Seven Houses

Of the 13 Houses our tribe has claimed throughout history, only seven have survived. Each was established and recognized by others within the tribe at some point in history, although each traces its lineage, and hence its claim of royal blood, back to one of the 13 Wolves of the Pale Tundra, those alphas ordained by Luna.

Over time, ancestor-spirits would appear to kings to bequeath the revelation of a pure lineage upon them, and so allow him to declare a house, descended from the original 13. Some claim that there have been more than 13 houses throughout our history, implying

that there were more wolves Touched by Silver than the 13 by which we reckon. I know nothing of them.

As you know, each house has a single king or queen, the ruler of that house's territory. Under that king are his lords and ladies, those who rule other septs within the kingdom, or are heroes of prominent packs or heirs to the throne. Under each lord are the stewards, in charge of coordinating pack tasks. Of course, each pack has its own leader, who may or may not bear an additional title of some sort.

House Wyrmfoe

We begin, of course, with your own house, Wyrmfoe. It was officially declared a house sometime in the 13th century, after its valorous efforts to save many Garou Kinfolk — not only Silver Fang, but those of other tribes also — from the human Inquisition. The Defiler Wyrm was on the rise, although none knew it even existed then. They believed it was the Eater-of-Souls at work. Regardless, where other houses failed to root out the evil, the tireless packs of Wyrmfoe sought it wherever it crept or hid and gave their own lives to destroy it. Wyrm minions quickly came to fear those of Wyrmfoe blood; they could smell the bloodline in these Garou before the house was even recognized by other Silver Fangs.

Wyrmfoe's territory was mainly in Spain, France and Holland. They spread to England, to claim territories lost by the Austere Howl. The other houses so greatly feared the amazing influence these "upstart" Garou had among the other tribes that they openly refused to allow them into their territories, for fear that they would find some way to claim them. Luckily for them, the New World beckoned, and with it, legends of powerful Wyrm creatures allowed to grow large in a land without Silver Fangs to hunt them. Most of Wyrmfoe's best and brightest left for the New World. Eventually, those left behind either abandoned their caerns to follow, or could not hold them against the other houses that sought to claim them, House Gleaming Eye among them.

So, this "youngest" house became quite the cause celebré. Of course, it was only young in so far as it came to be recognized as a single bloodline capable of rule late in our history. Before then, Wyrmfoe Garou existed, but they were assumed to be part of other bloodlines. You see, our seers did not always listen carefully to our ancestor-spirits, especially if they told us things that contradicted tried and true methods of tracking lineage. Somehow, those of the Wyrmfoe blood had been assumed lost — until the Wyrm identified them, usually by fleeing the battlefield crying "Vile wolf!"

Today, Wyrmfoe holds lands in America, mainly here, in this caern, and across the northeast. I have heard but cannot claim to know for sure, that another Wyrmfoe sept exists in Pacific Northwest? Or is it Northern California? No matter.

As I mentioned when I first recounted the history of Silver Fang houses, they used to trace lineage by bloodline, which was mainly determined by geography: the lands to which the houses migrated during the initial exodus from the Mother Country. For many, many years there was little contact between these septs, so that all Silver Fangs of one region shared the same blood, with no interbreeding through Kinfolk bloodlines from the houses that held other regions.

Your house best represents the modern trend to overlook bloodline in identifying oneself with one's house. While you, my lord, are pureblooded Wyrmfoe, there are some here in your sept who possess different lineage, mainly the Unbreakable Hearth or Wise Heart, but who gave it up to be associated with your house instead.

Such things are beginning to occur in other places around the world. It is fitting that it began in America, the so-called "melting pot," for the key to the phenomenon lies in the sudden migrations of our distant Kinfolk. We cannot always control our Kin, especially those who do not know their heritage. The world is smaller now, and many people now routinely move across half the world to live and work in foreign lands.

For example, House Wise Heart traditionally ruled in the Mediterranean and Middle East. Many Italian, Greek and Middle Eastern immigrants have come to New York in the past centuries, Wise Heart Kinfolk among them. As rare as it is, these Kin have birthed true Garou. But where are they to go? Their house has no sept here to take them in.

They have come here, to your sept. Of course, they are free to identify with their true bloodline, but many have never known it, and so desire to be Wyrmfoe. And your house allows it. In this way, in many septs in many lands, the houses become less identified with bloodline and more identified with a style of rule.

Wyrmfoe is known for its mavericks, its bold and individualistic kings — like your predecessor, Morningkill. They do not rely on tradition so much as on their own instinct and wits. You, it is said, are a classic king of House Wyrmfoe.

Nightmane Speaks:

Your house escaped the curse of the Betrayed Moon longer than any other. Perhaps by refusing leadership roles over territories for so long, concentrating on attacking the Wyrm, you avoided her notice. But she caught up to you, as illustrated by your grandfather, King Jacob Morningkill. His madness was plain for all to see; it did not hide under the usual mask of extremist ideology.

Clan Crescent Moon

Lord Byeli Speaks:

The most prominent clan next to yours — and *the* most prominent for most of our history, until the Shadow Curtain rose over Russia — is Clan Crescent Moon. Why "clan" rather than "house"? Because their lineage is older and clings to ancient tradition more than most. Once, all houses were called clans. Only after long breeding with humans did we adopt a less familial human nomenclature for our bloodlines.

From its height as the paragon of Silver Fang élan, it fell far during the terrible trials of the Hag's reign over the Mother Country. The Crescent Moon king went mad and dissolved the Lodge of the Sun, losing their valuable counsel when it was needed most. But blood as pure as the Crescent Moon's cannot completely fail. Scions arose to retake their ancient honor, proving themselves over and over against the terrible monsters that served the Hag. Finally, the witch was overthrown and her empire destroyed. We rose victorious thereafter, hunting down her allies and slaying them before they could burrow into their niches in the earth. Certainly, not all the Hag's minions suffered our justice, but those that remain hide, quaking in fear of our anger.

Our victory could never have occurred were it not for Queen Tamara Tvarivich. She is a great queen. Also mighty in determining the overthrow of the Hag's empire was Arkady. I will not repeat here before you his deeds, for I know he did you wrong. I beg you, however, to soften your heart and hear them from us when you arrive in the Mother Country and take hospitality from his sept, which now endeavors to make up to you a wrong done by one of its own.

Nightmane Speaks:

Crescent Moon is strong once again for it has regained its passion. Queen Tvarivich has walked the lands of the dead and spoken with ghosts long departed. The lore she learned from them prepared her well for the battle against the Hag and her vile Zmei dragons. The queen is a fearsome figure to confront, but all know she is more fearful by far to the Wyrm, who dreads those times when she takes the battlefield.

"Hold on," Albrecht said. "These are your people, so I understand your reluctance to admit it, but don't they suffer any of this curse?"

"Oh, yes, my lord" Nightmane said. "Most dreadfully. Tvarivich's father was afflicted so terribly he almost sacrificed us all — unknowingly — to the Wyrm by

revealing our secrets to the Hag's minions when he thought he was conspiring with Ivory Priests. And Arkady, I now know, had a madness of his own, an ambition to free the Mother Country that caused him to lose all sense of honor in its pursuit. I weep for his spirit."

The Gleaming Eye

Lord Byeli Speaks:

My house is the Gleaming Eye. We have ruled Northern Europe since well before it was known as such. France, Germany, Scandinavia — they are all our traditional lands. I myself was born and raised in Britain, in what was then the single Gleaming Eye sept in that country, sharing a caern with the Austere Howl. My Anglo-Saxon Kinfolk came from Gleaming Eye lands in Germany. Enough of us came that our house eventually won a hand in that land's ruling.

Calvin de Provence is the king of our house, ruling from Belgium. His sister, the queen and true ruler, disappeared on a journey into the Umbra. Packs sent to find her have returned with no news. King Calvin has increased our house's vigilance against Wyrm taint within other houses. He has been especially concerned with the Austere Howl's fall to corruption, and has sent packs to take control of many Austere Howl caerns. He has ordered them to hunt down the allegedly corrupt Queen Mary, but has so far been unable to catch her.

I fear this conflict will spread to other houses. More than ever before, we must unite ourselves against the coming Apocalypse, but no champion has arisen to take the role of unifier. I wonder: Can you, my lord, muster the European Fangs around your banner and bring unity? Or will this be the task of Queen Tvarivich?

Nightmane Speaks:

Despite what its detractors wish, House Gleaming Eye has yet remained pure and largely untouched by Wyrm taint or Moon-curse. So far as can be judged, that is, for the fate of their runaway queen is not yet known. Their vigilance against the Wyrm aids the other houses, for they now also grow wary for signs of taint from within, if for no other reason than to give the inquisitors of Gleaming Eye no excuse to investigate them.

Austere Howl

Lord Byeli Speaks:

As I said, the Austere Howl is widely believed to have fallen to Wyrm taint. It is now believed that the taint came from their human Kinfolk, involved in terrible Wyrm cults hidden within the British noble families. They engaged in Hellfire Club style rites wherein they would sacrifice the children of commoners to an entity they called "Red Jack." They were caught in the act by a mixed pack of Get of Fenris, Fianna and Glass Walkers. The scandal tore the house apart. It seems that some of the current Austere Howl dignitaries had been born to some of these twisted Kinfolk families, and secretly aided them in their Wyrm worship.

Well, poor Queen Mary. She tried to run them out of her house, but the scandal was too great by then. The Gleaming Eye fell in force upon some of their caerns and took them, claiming that they would investigate the Austere Howl and examine them for taint. The other tribes fell in with them, turning on their traditional rulers in the Austere Howl. I wonder if the Gleaming Eye is fully aware that, if these tribes were so quick to abandon their centuries-old rulers, they will surely abandon anyone if it suits their short-term needs.

Queen Mary's court is on the run, forced underground, ruling incognito, hiding from the hunt called upon them. They gained a temporary ally in the Fianna of Dublin, but disaster fell upon them when a manifestation of the Red Jack spirit attacked Fianna caerns. Most people believed that Queen Mary brought it with her, or that she summoned it herself. Forced to flee even this scarce hospitality, none can say where she is now. Perhaps she hides in the Umbra, rallying what Austere Howl Fangs she can to clear their house's name. Or perhaps she has gone to reside in Malfeas with her new masters....

"Answer me this," Albrecht said. "How come you know so much about this stuff if you've been trapped away in Russia for so long?"

"I was among the first emissaries to leave the Mother Country after the fall of the Shadow Curtain," Lord Byeli said. "As a lorekeeper, I immediately traveled to my brethren in England and collected what news I could of doings in the world. I have been paying rapt attention to any fact or rumor since."

Nightmane Speaks:

Sadly, I suspect Queen Mary is innocent of the charges against her. I suspect she is the pawn of retribution brought by a rival. Many houses have suffered taint in their Kinfolk lines before and survived; that she was not given the opportunity is very suspicious to me. I would beg you, oh king, if you encounter her, do not prejudge her based on rumor: deem for yourself whether she is of the Wyrm or not. Use the Crown to command a confession from her; even the Defiler cannot silence her tongue then.

The Unbreakable Hearth

Lord Byeli Speaks:

One of the most steadfast of houses, the Unbreakable Hearth, like House Wyrmfoe, was among the first houses to immigrate to the New World. Originally from France, Spain, Switzerland and Hungary, it claimed new lands in Canada and North America. Unlike most other American tribes, the Unbreakable Hearth set its power base in the cities, close to its human Kinfolk. Perhaps more than any other house, the Unbreakable Hearth keeps close watch on its Kin and prevents them going astray.

The troubles in Chicago sorely tested their sept there, ruled by the king of the house, Cyrus-the-Bald. But he overcame the Leech-hatched plots to control his Kin and demarked territories that the Leeches dared not cross for fear of sparking another great war in that city.

The Unbreakable Hearth prides itself on its long-recognized role as a facilitator between other tribes, although they have done little of late to quell any of the inter-tribal conflicts raging across North America. They talk a good talk, but are short on action. Perhaps Cyrus' heir, young Margaret Standing Stone, will prove better at this task than her father, should he ever actually step down and let her rule.

Nightmane Speaks:

I know little about this house, for their recent history is almost entirely American. Unlike Lord Byeli, I am still ignorant of many things that transpired while the Shadow Curtain barred us from the rest of the world.

The Blood-Red Crest

Lord Byeli Speaks:

This house suffers a terrible tragedy. It has failed to birth a single new cub in the past five years. Its ruler, King Palmarstan Nayar, was poised to lift the house out of Harano, but with no new cubs, no new Rites of Passage, they have fallen back into their deep depression. They have lost so many caerns in India to encroaching development or supernatural forces, that the future seems nothing but a void to them.

The tribe has fallen back, relinquishing territories, to gather around what few caerns they still hold. This has strengthened them — temporarily. Their increased numbers in smaller regions emboldens them, and rubbing shoulders with one another after long separations has renewed their culture, but it cannot last. Some in this house are said to pray for the Apocalypse, that it might give them one final battle in which to prove themselves.

Nightmane Speaks:

From what I understand of this situation, it is truly tragic. King Nayar seems to have avoided or staved off the Moon-curse, but suffers another, stranger curse: a sterile lineage from his house. What could cause such a thing? Some speculate that there are indeed cubs being born true, but that the Kin Fetches have become corrupt and hide them — or worse, find a means to have the children slain before their Firsting. An investigation is desperately required, but it will take commitment and time to unravel this mystery.

Wise Heart

Lord Byeli Speaks:

The strangest house among us. I suspect it might soon follow the Blood-Red Crest into loss, if nothing occurs to reinvigorate it. It has lost many caerns to battle or to other tribes. They were once one of the more prominent houses in the Mother Country, but the last of them there died fighting the Wyrm horrors unleashed by the Hag. The house's original base was in Italy and Greece, but they are now mainly represented by their septs in Turkey and other Middle Eastern countries, where their numbers are few — and their lupus population even fewer.

Their wisdom is still said to be great, though. They hoard it more than ever now, and rarely reveal it to others within the tribe. If they are not careful, House Gleaming Eye might next turn its inquisitorial eye on them.

King Tariki is a fearsome figure, a member of the Ivory Priesthood and one who is said to know the Secret of Death handed down to our tribe from the First Wolf. He travels the Umbra frequently, although it is said he saw something so terrible on his last journey that his fur fell out and he cannot stop shivering. Nonetheless, those who meet his eyes say his resolve his unflinching. None would dream of deposing him.

Nightmane Speaks:

I cannot say which kings have been given the Secret of Kingship, but I know that Tariki has long known it. I believe he sought a solution in the lands of the dead, and perhaps stayed too long. Even though he bears the Secret of Death, which I do not know, surely he cannot stare into the eyes of ghosts for too long without being touched by their despair.

The Last Houses

Lord Byeli Speaks:

The less said about these, the better. It chills the blood to contemplate them and their failures.

Conquering Claw

This house killed itself through insane infighting. They were once glorious warriors, bred from the military might of Rome. But they never fully recovered from the fall of that empire. What's more, they gained the enmity of many undead creatures that skulked near their territories. These Leeches effectively slew many of them in small, surprise conflicts. The Conquering Claw's decision to use the wealthy bankers of Italy as breeding stock was ill informed, for many of them were in thrall to the Leeches. What few of them survived into the Renaissance killed themselves off in sword duels and poisonings, each convinced the others served vampiric interests.

Nightmane Speaks:

And yet, it is whispered among the Moon Lodge that one of the Conquering Claw lords conquered his own madness through some means unknown to us today, although some suspect it involved swearing fealty to a human wizard, and so sacrificing his own leadership. If that is the price of erasing the curse, it is too much to pay.

The Ice Pack

Lord Byeli Speaks:

Rumor surfaces now and then that scions of this house still live, running with pure white wolves in the barren places of the North. I don't know whether to believe them or not. Their legends sound more like materialized ancestor-spirits hunting the Wyrm than flesh-and-blood wolves. Nonetheless, some persist in believing that, if the Ice Pack can be found, and if an applicant can gain admittance to one of its packs, he can be healed of all mental illness or sorrow that afflicts him. A wonderful dream, with little basis in fact.

Because the Ice Pack is believed to be pure and untarnished, many say that they took no part in the War of Rage. And yet, certain ancestors implicate them in the first sparks of that conflict, not as instigators, but victims. They perhaps suffered the wrath of another shapechanging race, rightly or not, and so were used by another house to rally a war.

Nightmane Speaks:

It is said among the Siberakh, the tribe that claims lineage from our kind and the Wendigo, that sometimes, a spirit can impregnate a Kinfolk wolf, and so give birth to a Garou with amazing blessings. I believe that is the manner in which the Ice Pack still lives among us, not as a physical blood lineage, but as a very rare, very miraculous birth sparked by an Ice Pack ancestor spirit. Would that this were true, for it holds promise for all the lost.

Winter Snow

Lord Byeli Speaks:

They bear our shame and are an example to all kings of the price of power. Their last king, whose

name I shall not repeat here, became drunk with power. But surely you already know his tale, for he wore the Silver Crown. In his power-mad rage, he decimated the numbers of our English allies in the Get of Fenris and the Fianna, and so allowed the Black Spiral Dancers to charge down from the North unopposed. The house regretted this ever since, and could not escape the crushing weight of that responsibility. They all to a man succumbed to Harano, weeping for their great failure. We must endeavor to ensure it never happens again.

Nightmane Speaks:

My lord, a Galliard here in your caern sung for me the *Lay of the Silver Crown*. In it, he describes your encounter with King Aaron Everstone and the ghostly remnants of his house in a distant Umbral realm. I wept to hear it. Perhaps one day their spirits may shed their sorrow and return to the Summer Lands for which all our spirits yearn.

The Golden Sky

Lord Byeli Speaks:

Perhaps the greatest among us, even mightier than the Crescent Moon. Arak Mammoth-Bold was of this lineage, and so this house cleaved most closely to Falcon and Helios. Their disappearance is still a great mystery. Some say they migrated to an Umbral Realm on a mission for Helios, others that they all went mad and wandered into the spirit world each alone or in groups, and never found their way home. They whisper it was Luna's revenge for the slight this house delivered onto her by making pact with Helios, but Clan Crescent Moon denies this, for they are the closest of us to Luna and say that the Golden Sky made peace with the Moon ere they ever left.

Some hold out hope that the Golden Sky will return to us in our hour of greatest need.

Nightmane Speaks:

Oh, yes, the Moon Lodge has wondered: Did the Golden Sky sacrifice themselves to the Betrayed Moon to end the curse? If so, why has the curse not ended? Perhaps they failed whatever test she decreed for them in the Umbra. Or perhaps they fled her reach entirely, and joined Helios in his celestial realms, far from her reach, guarding his throne as spirit wolves. Perhaps their going away was Helios' price for our tribe's pact.

The Unknown

Lord Byeli Speaks:

There is another house that we do not name. Record of its name or deeds is unclear, although we suspect it was the house that initiated the War of Rage. Some claim their sheer cruelty in hunting other shapechangers so offended Gaia that she removed them from the world, tearing their very name from history and record. No spirit seems to remember them or can name them.

Nightmane Speaks:

I know less of this house than Lord Byeli. They are forgotten in all records, even those of the spirits.

The Unnamed

Lord Byeli Speaks:

Sometimes called the Silver Spiral, this house went to the Wyrm. It is said that they are now dukes in the Wyrm's army, corrupting other Silver Fangs and initiating them into their own vile house. I will speak no more of them, for they deserve not even the recognition of enmity.

Nightmane Speaks:

I join my silence to Lord Byeli's.

The Celestial Lodges

Lord Byeli Speaks:

Our tribe is beholden to two Celestines: Helios and Luna. It is through them that we hold our divine right to rule the Garou Nation. Above all, we revere Gaia, but we serve Her through the Sun and the Moon.

Each Silver Fang is encouraged to choose one a lodge soon after his Firsting. Some delay this decision and some refuse to ever make it; these Garou tend to never rise in rank or gain favored positions in the tribe, for if they cannot prove their commitment to the principles espoused by a lodge, they cannot be trusted with the commitments of an important post, such as Caern Warder, Ritemaster or Gatekeeper.

A king's court consists of his advisors from both lodges and his personal seneschal, who sees to the logistics of running a sept. Each lodge has three necessary posts. In order of prominence, they are: shaman, steward and squire. The shaman leads his lodge, the steward sees that the shaman's orders are carried out by assigning tasks to specific packs, and the squire maintains the lodge's material and spiritual possessions and keeps the rolls of membership.

The shaman is always a Theurge, for that auspice traditionally hears the voices of the spirits best. In the case of the lodges, the spirits of Sun and Moon are sought for advice. The steward is always a Philodox, for that auspice traditionally arranges the affairs of the Garou. Finally, the squire is always a Galliard, for that auspice traditionally tracks the heroes and helpers of the Garou.

Obviously, not all Silver Fangs can hold such posts. Most are rank and file members of the lodges, performing the tasks decreed by the shaman and assigned by the steward.

The king is of neither lodge; he sits apart from them and is the balance between them, the Champion of Twilight, when the Sun and Moon mingle. His seneschal is likewise neutral, and is most often an Ahroun, although some kings elect instead a Ragabash, the more ancient tradition.

Lodge of the Sun

The Lodge of the Sun is concerned mainly with events in the material world: history and current affairs, relations between septs and other tribes, or tracking the movements of the Enemy. Its methods are order and reason, the tools of Helios.

This lodge is dominated by homid Garou. Most lupus choose the Lodge of the Moon, although not all of them.

There are many methods of leadership recognized by the Silver Fangs, who have studied such matters for many years. Each tends to be assigned to one or the other lodge, usually because it is most suited to that lodge's philosophy or was first studied by that lodge.

The solar styles of leadership, or "courts," are: the Forthright Court, the Conquering Court, the Steadfast Court, the Righteous Court and the Ideal Court. Explicating each of these styles would take a week in itself. The officers of the Sun Lodge can certainly instruct you on them as you desire.

Each king tends towards one of these courts in his own rule, or one of the Moon Lodge courts. Some kings simply do as their own beliefs dictate, and are associated with a court style by default; others delve into the philosophy and teachings of those who have practiced the court before, becoming true scholars of the ruler's path. I would name you, my lord, as of the Forthright Court, the court that most values honesty and frank dealings with its subjects and allies. Subterfuge is seen as a coward's way to this court. What cannot be won through honesty is not worth the winning.

As for the other courts, in short: The Conquering Court values growth through conquest; it is rarely practiced in these times. The Steadfast Court prefers to hold its ground and cleave to tradition rather than grow or attempt new ideas. The Righteous Court is ruled by a king with a cause, one whose goals have primary importance over all other considerations of that court — even at the cost of its long-term survival. The Ideal Court is one governed by an idea, a philosophy or creed, whose dictates color all actions of that court.

No king is bound by the laws of these courts; they are leadership aids at best. Most kings tend toward one court, but often rule as need be by the dictates of any court best suited for the times.

In ceremonies, the Lodge of the Sun takes the direction of North. Its accoutrements are placed there.

In some septs, such as those of the Blood-Red Crest and even some of House Wise Heart, the direction of the Sun is East, where it is first seen in the morning.

Lodge of the Moon

Nightmane Speaks:

The Lodge of the Moon is concerned with spiritual and mystical affairs, and with the emotional tenure of its kingdom: the morale of its king's subjects. It ensures that relations with the spirits are well maintained, and ever seeks to renew Luna's favor. Its means are insight and intuition, the tools of Luna. While most of our lodge's members are homid, we attract the majority of lupus within our tribe.

Our ceremonies are held in the ritual direction of South, opposite the solar North. Some Eastern septs adopt the West instead. The truth is that it does not matter; it is mere habit. The Moon cares not which way we face or where we stand. Does that sound odd for a lodge associated with rites? Ritual is important, yes, but slavish attention to such details is an obsession of the Sun, not the Moon.

Like the Sun Lodge, there are certain "courts" or methods of leadership associated with the Moon Lodge: the Primal Court, the Empty Court, the Subtle Court, the Charmed Court and the Changing Court.

As I said before, I believe your style is closest to the Subtle Court, for it wishes to keep its light under a bushel, so to speak, to let traits other than kingship and divine right govern its relations. I understand that Lord Byeli sees your style as Forthright, and this is true, too: only a one-dimensional king leads with a single style.

The Primal Court adheres to the most ancient ways, those of our wolf instincts; it is rarely practiced by any but our lupus kings, as rare as they are. The Empty Court seems mad to outsiders, yet it is based on keen wisdom: the relinquishment of any standards or traditions, replaced by pure intuition. The Charmed Court is ruled by the favor of a brood of spirits, who act as advisors to the king in all his dealings; a very rare practice today. The Changing Court adjusts its style to the whim of its ruler, and is the most mercurial — even more so than the Empty Court, for even intuition may be shared and predicted. It seems that your grandfather, Morningkill, adopted this style, though perhaps not by choice. It is best practiced by a Ragabash king, but can be misused by a madman.

Camps

Lord Byeli Speaks:

The very idea of camps among the Silver Fangs is somewhat abhorrent. We are the leaders of the other tribes. It is our duty to present a single face to them. And yet, our differences of opinion often show in the political camps or in the more secretive brotherhoods, the existence of which we openly deny to other tribes.

Renewal

Two "camps," Renewal and the Royalists, are not social affiliations but political philosophies. Often, like-minded subscribers to one or the other philosophy will work with one another across territorial boundaries, to push their agendas on others.

The Renewal camp seeks to "fix" what they believe to be a problem in the tribe: excessive adherence to ceremony and tradition in the face of urgent need for new solutions to modern problems. They urge kings to rely not on past wisdom, but on present intelligence. This may certainly be best when applied by a truly adept king, one who thinks quickly or who has wise counsel. But what of those who are not so wise?

Renewal camps are popular here in the Americas, and also among the Blood-Red Crest in India, among those advisors to their king — what little good it will do them. There are many Renewal camp advocates among your sept, I believe, holding you up as their shining example. I understand that you refuse to take a side in this. Very wise.

Nightmane Speaks:

This philosophy began with House Wise Heart. If they support it, it is worth heeding, at least in thought if not yet deed. It calls not only for a renewal of leadership style but a spiritual reinvigoration, a return to the wisdom of the spirits themselves. In ancient times, many kings would consult the local spirit leaders before undertaking any action that would affect the area. Today, such thought for non-human others is scant. The Renewalists, ironically, call for a return to this forsaken tradition.

Royalists

Lord Byeli Speaks:

Our ancient traditions stand in place of the need for individual cunning; they provide an answer for nearly every solution, if followed correctly. So claim the Royalists. They see no reason to adapt to modern times at all, but believe the old ways will serve us best, and that, by honoring them, we also ensure their continued relevance in the spirit world, if not the material world.

Too many of the other tribes have forgotten the old ways. When we do so, we give them license to also do as we do. We are their examples. It is our responsibility to strictly honor that which we wish them to honor. In these troubled times, does it not seem best to ourselves return to ceremony, so that they may do the same?

Renewalists accuse Royalists of seeking only power. This is a simple mischaracterization, and not supportable when one realizes that the majority of Royalists are not kings but their lords — those who serve the kings. It is their task to ensure the old ways are maintained, that the ceremonies are performed properly, and that kings are well counseled in the lessons of the past. To lose even a thread of this link to our heritage is to unravel the entire tapestry of Silver Fang history.

Nightmane Speaks:

As you have surely surmised, Lord Byeli is a Royalist. It suits his temperament, and serves the tribe, for it fuels his passion for lorekeeping. There is a need for both Royalists and Renewalists in our tribe, as long as the balance is maintained and no one side gains prominence with any one king.

The Ivory Priesthood

Lord Byeli Speaks:

Keepers of the Secret of Death. This secretive society of Theurges is somewhat like a human mystery cult from the ancient Mediterranean. They initiate proven applicants in hidden ceremonies held in deep caves far under the earth. Only those who pass a series of spiritual tests are granted the right to know the Secret of Death, but that right comes with a responsibility: to safeguard it from the unworthy.

And what is the Secret of Death? I cannot say, for I am not a member of this society. It was originally won by the First Wolf when he rescued Gaia from the Underworld, and then handed for safekeeping to this secretive order. Queen Tamara Tvarivich is an Ivory Priestess, and it is clear to all of us from the Mother Country that the Secret gave her great powers. It somehow allows its bearers to walk the lands of the dead and wrest knowledge from them. But it comes with a price: members of this society exude an aura of solemn quietude, and some even smell of the grave. They often wear white robes embroidered with silver death runes culled from many cultures.

I have heard many stories about them, and this one I will tell: Queen Tvarivich went away from her people for three long moons, walking the lands of the dead. She returned with an iron box and a key, which she forbade anyone to open until the direst of circumstances was upon them. When she confronted the Zmei dragon, she opened the box. None could see what was in it, but all felt the invisible shroud of gloom that escaped from it and descended on the Zmei. Because of it, the Garou were able to slay the otherwise unconquerable beast.

I spoke with one of Queen Tvarivich's packmates, who lost a leg in that battle. He was flush with liquor and so perhaps told me more than discretion would normally allow. He spoke of a strange land unlike any Underworld we have heard of before. This was not a place for the shades of departed humans, who can only mutter about their past lives, but a place for the ghosts of dead animals, those whose tragedy was such that they could not return to the Womb of Gaia for rebirth.

These forlorn creatures know many secrets of death, not just one. This old Garou told me that the Queen learned from them the Secret of the Seven Scents of Doom. He said that each form of death — violence, calamity, suicide, starvation and more — had a particular scent, and that those who knew the secret could smell those scents before the death they portended occurred. In this manner, a Garou could forestall death.

But Death cannot be cheated. He takes his measure in other ways if thwarted in one. Any who would use these secrets to change fate must be prepared to bargain with Death or become his next victim. This Garou whispered to me that many Ivory Priests had traveled on far journeys into Umbral lands on quests for Death, going to the Realms we know — those of life and nature — where Death cannot tread. In this way, they bring Death secrets and artifacts he cannot otherwise claim, and so escape their own dooms whenever they use their secrets to change fate.

I seriously hope the price paid for such services is wisely borne by these priests, and that they are not selling all our souls for their own gain.

Nightmane Speaks:

No other society of Silver Fangs makes me more nervous than do the Ivory Priests. I fear they meddle in affairs not meant for Garou. Death is not an issue we should delve into. Our duty is to life and Gaia. Upon death, our spirits go to our ancestral Realms, not to the bleak Underworld reserved for those humans who have sinned against themselves or their mysterious Celestines. This talk of an Underworld for animal spirits disturbs me. Such a thing has been told in legends before, even among the Wendigo. But it is always associated with those creatures that have done wrong, who have somehow turned their backs on Gaia. Some say it is a purgatory for them, until they remember how to be animals again — to regain their instincts — but this sounds more like a human idea than one fit for animals.

I fear that humans have found a way to curse those animals closest to them, to drag their spirits

into the Underworld with them. If so, then we should not compound their misery by wresting secrets from these ghosts, but instead find a way to free them from this hell.

The Gray Raptors

Lord Byeli Speaks:

Like the Ivory Priesthood, we do not officially recognize these camps or speak of them to the other tribes. We know they exist among us, but do not deign to speak of them, for they often represent facets of our leadership best left unspoken or unacknowledged.

The Gray Raptors is a society of Silver Fangs who seek to punish those who insult or ignore the Silver Fangs' ancient right to rule. Their victims are most often leaders or members of other tribes who go out of their way to resist a Silver Fang king's judgment or ruling. It is often not in the best interest of rulers to bring justice to these offenders, but the Gray Raptors do not always heed the best interests of the tribe — they are more concerned about the letter of the law and the insult done to our tribe when any Garou fails to heed us. Hence, they most often act without any writ from a king, although many a king has nonetheless used their actions to cement his power. Many other kings, however, are enraged that any Silver Fang would dare act without direct permission from them, and so seek to rein in these vigilantes and make examples of them.

Their main tactic is to catch an offender alone by day or night and bind him to a tree upside-down. While he hangs, they berate him for his insolence and beat him with silver clubs. Sometimes, if the offense was great, they will carve pictograms into his fur, usually the symbols for "shame" and "oathbreaker" — despite the fact that few tribes today recognize the ancient oaths binding them to Silver Fang rule. Their mission is to strike fear into others, and so they do not stop at merely beating a Garou — that causes anger more than fear. They will harass him by proving that they can get to him at any time, and no one can stop them. They will break into their homes and leave tokens of their presence, as reminders of their vigilance.

Gray Raptors keep their identities secret, for they know they would suffer potential punishment not only from other tribes, but also from their own kind, for not all Fangs approve of their tactics. When delivering punishment, they call upon a secret Gift that cloaks them in gloomy shrouds shaped like bird wings. They almost appear to be Corax in their half-man, half-bird forms, except that their color is not so much black as dark gray.

Nightmane Speaks:

The real reason the Gray Raptors have not been abolished by our kings, besides the aid they sometimes render those kings, is that they do not hunt only offending Garou of other tribes. They are also said to hunt the undead, and to use other Gifts invoking the powers of the Sun against them. Few stories are told about these deeds, however, for their names are unknown. They are all too often seen as mysterious and faceless figures, icons rather than flesh-and-blood Garou. We rarely tell stories about those we cannot name, and so the Gray Raptors' victories against darkness — if true — go largely unheeded.

Masters of the Seal

Lord Byeli Speaks:

The most secretive of all our unacknowledged camps — more so even than the Gray Raptors — are the Masters of the Seal. No Silver Fang would dare to admit being a member of this society, and would surely challenge any that accused him of it. This is because they are thieves, an ignoble profession.

It is their duty to steal secrets from spirits and from other tribes. As you have surely surmised by now, the Silver Fangs are obsessed with secrets: the Secret of Death, the Secret of Hunting, the Secret of Packs, and so forth. We feel it is our birthright to know these things. As rulers, nothing should be kept from us. And yet, others do, of course, keep their own secrets.

The Masters of the Seal have petitioned many spirits that our tribe does not normally deal with — tricksters such as Raccoon or Monkey — to gain Gifts that allow them to open wax seals without detection, to unlock locks with but a touch, and to enter warded places unseen. Like the Gray Raptors, they keep their identities secret, but they divulge what secrets they learn to those who need to know them: seneschals, Gatekeepers, Warders, anyone who can use such information to benefit the tribe.

Nightmane Speaks:

When Lord Alexandre Greatmane of House Gleaming Eye was caught pilfering a cache of treasures kept by Yurgen Axebreaker of the Get of Fenris, the scandal shook the entire tribe. He was accused of being one of these Masters of the Seal. Our tribe, of course, denied that such a society existed, and demanded that Lord Greatmane be remanded to his king for proper punishment. The Get would have none of it and instead dragged Lord Greatmane into the Battleground Umbral Realm and challenged him to leave it alive. If he could escape, they would let him go. Somehow, perhaps through one of the special Gifts these Sealbreakers are given by their spirits, he found a way to slip from the Realm unnoticed, and disappeared, never to be seen again. I have heard, however, that he has gained sanctuary in some sept in America's west.

Breeds

Lord Byeli Speaks:

It is no secret that our tribe lacks many lupus members. Our sacrifice long ago to live near our human Kinfolk so that we could manage them has cost us. While we do maintain Kinfolk packs near our wilderness caerns, these become rarer and rarer in most places these days. Lupus still make up a good proportion of our tribe in the Mother Country, but rarely elsewhere.

Even more rare are those lupus among us who attain the throne of kingship. This usually only happens in wilderness septs. Late last century, the Firebird Sept was ruled by a succession of lupus kings, but the Wyrm minions who controlled the Bolsheviks brought them down. Stalin declared devastating hunts on wolves throughout Russia. Our Kinfolk stock was hurt badly, but we hid those we could in the farthest places, away from human habitation, and they survived.

We must content ourselves with our human side. The other tribes often accuse us of being too human in our thoughts and traditions, but we ignore such whining. We fully realize our plight without need of their reminders, and we endeavor as best we can to overcome it.

Family

Lord Byeli Speaks:

We, like most Garou, have three forms of family: our Garou brethren in the tribe, our human and wolf Kinfolk, and our spirit family: ancestors and Falcon's brood. We hold our family sacred and sacrosanct. None can meddle with or harm our family without incurring our wrath and retribution.

Kinfolk

In the old days, any Garou who dared to breed with our Kinfolk stock was killed for such temerity. Sometimes, the Kin who suffered the violation, willing or not, unknowing or aware, was rendered sterile, so that he or she would not breed whelps of ignoble lineage.

It is vitally important that we maintain and trace the noble lineage of our Kin, whether wolf or human. This is easiest to do among humans, for they also trace their lineages, especially if those lineages place them in positions of power or privilege; maintaining that privilege for future generations is contingent on tracing the bloodline.

Why are we so concerned with bloodline? Is this not merely a primitive holdover from a past that recognized excellence only in physical makeup, rather than mental acuity? I think not. One look at the other tribes and one can see the result of breeding with those not born to responsibility. It is not so much a matter of genetics or evolution, but one of class and culture. Only those born to power can properly wield it. Certainly, there are exceptions, but they are just that. Most such exceptions prove to be worse than better.

Those few who rise to power from the lower classes rarely have the sense of *noblesse oblige* required of a great ruler. They are instead all too obsessed with getting revenge against the upper classes for not freely distributing the rewards these patricians earned by dint of initiative. They believe that everyone, no matter how useless or lazy, should be given the spoils of victory. Truly, this is an outcast or scapegoat philosophy, cherished by those not strong enough to challenge an alpha on their own.

The weakness in human society is that it gives voice to its scapegoats, the lowest among them. One has but to look at such tribes as the Bone Gnawers or even the Uktena to see the result of such thinking among the Garou: pitiful begging or suspicious secretiveness.

"I was wondering when we'd get to this old chestnut," Albrecht said. "I can tell you from personal experience that it's bullshit."

"How so, my lord?" Lord Byeli said. "What personal experience tells you this? Your time among the outcasts when you were in exile? Forgive me, but it told you nothing about their ability to lead tribes. Your own humility may have aided you in your rule, but do not forget that you were not born or raised among such outcasts — you were inculcated with Silver Fang pride from the time you could walk, reinforced once you had your First Change. Indeed, was it not such pride that caused Morningkill to fear you, and so exile you?"

"Always got an answer, huh? Forget my example. I know lots of Bone Gnawers who never had to lift a paw to help me, but they did anyway. They went out of their way to be generous even though they had nothing."

"But that is their lot, my lord. They are the lowest among us, but they do not resent us, for they know it was not we who put them there. They earned their role long ago and now must live within it. Of course they helped you: It's their instinct to aid their betters. That some have lost that instinct is no statement on our rule, but an indictment of their inability to hold to tradition."

"This is ridiculous. I'm not going to get anywhere with you, am I? What about Evan, my packmate? He's not highborn and yet he has a major destiny among his tribe."

"His lineage may not have been traced by his tribe, but I believe you will find that it is not impure. That he was chosen by the spirits to resolve a wrong done to them long ago shows that his breeding was not that of a mongrel. He may not possess the preferred racial characteristics of his tribe's human breeding stock, but his bloodline lacks any obvious degeneracy."

"Holy Gaia, you're a walking, talking relic of the age of eugenics! I refuse to have this conversation. Let's just drop it and move on."

"Very well then, my lord. As you know, it is our way to keep our Kinfolk close and to watch all their doings. We even choose their breeding partners, to make sure that only the best are born from their mixed bloodlines. Oh, I see your grimace. I know you hate the practice, and so do many Kinfolk, but just as many, if not more, are proud of their role.

"Before we begin another argument, I will speak of our lupus lineages. Obviously, it is not a matter of class among the wolves, but of breeding: We choose only alphas and betas with which to breed. Any wolf incapable of rising to the top of his or her pack is not Silver Fang material. Hence, their children will be strong and worthy of our tribe should they breed true."

"Aren't you forgetting something?" Albrecht said. "What about metis?"

Lord Byeli grimaced. "They are among us. There is little use denying it. They are a shameful reminder that even we cannot always keep to our own laws. We do not abide them as well as other tribes seem to, but neither do we turn them away, as long as they are of Silver Fang blood and no other. We give them a place within the sept, one that keeps them far from our worldly doings. They rarely rise to attain any post of importance, although I know a few in the Mother Country who serve as officers of the lodges. You must understand that, during the bleak years of the Shadow Curtain, even our kind sought solace where they should not."

"I understand. It happens. It's unfortunate, but I'm glad to hear it's not tribal policy to euthanize them. I'd have broken that rule a number of times when called upon for clemency."

"Perhaps your mercy is what is called for in these times. Perhaps the metis shall be the most numerous foot soldiers in the Apocalypse, and so prove their use in the end. Please, I mean to spark no further arguments. I shall move on, and speak of how we watch over our Kin."

Kin-Fetches

We track our Kinfolk by assigning Kin-Fetch spirits to watch over them. It would be unfeasible to assign a spirit to each Kin, so we instead set them to watch and record specific family bloodlines. For instance, there is a Kin Fetch to watch over the Albrechts and all that

breed with them for up to three generations removed. I have heard since I arrived here that your young cousin, Seth Rothchild, had a particularly grueling Firsting, but that the Albrecht Kin-Fetch alerted your sept so that they could find him before trouble arose.

To keep from engaging too many Kin Fetches, some septs enforce interbreeding at times, so as not to risk spreading the bloodline too thin and possibly lose track of some of their offshoots.

Nightmane Speaks:

Lord Byeli is not exactly correct in what he says. While the traditional practice of the tribe has been to keep only noble breeding stock, that has changed within the last century, particularly here in America and among the Unbreakable Hearth. The qualities looked for in Kinfolk are no longer just wealth or patrician lineage, but honesty and integrity, courage and ambition. We now often breed with the so-called "lower classes," with those who display such qualities, for we believe that their children will also inherit them, so long as the families are strong and stay together. We do not breed among those who have no family bonds, for that, more than any other cause, leads to degenerate characteristics: alcoholism, narcissism, and even depression. We do not need to compound our curse with the diseases of our Kinfolk.

Spirits

Lord Byeli Speaks:

Although we do not breed with spirits, and rarely live directly among them, some are nonetheless tied to us through deep bonds of compassion or tradition. They are a vital part of any Silver Fang court.

Ancestors

Our ancestors still come to us to remind us of their rulings or their follies in life. They reside in the Summer Lands of the Umbra, a beauteous place suffused with the glory of Helios. Each former king or lord is surrounded by a host of Sun spirits, performing their bidding and making them comfortable, reminders of their former lives on the throne. When needed, they answer our call — if they deem the need important. Without their wisdom and lore, we would have to reinvent kingship every other generation, or rely, as do humans, on recorded words, which rarely convey as much as those lessons taught directly by those who were there.

Nightmane Speaks:

Beware when calling upon our ancestors: some of them still carry the curse, even though they have left their material bodies behind. Too many kings consult ancestors who are mad or deranged, and whose counsel is thus suspect and dangerous. Because our tribe refuses to accept that such things happen, none has yet chronicled which ancestors are safe to petition and which should be avoided. They should all be respected, but only those known not to be Moon-thralls should be heeded.

Falcon's Brood

Lord Byeli Speaks:

Falcon maintains an aerial court in the Summer Lands, in the high trees and crags of that Realm, whereby we may petition him or his brood. We can also find him in other places he holds court, such as Pangaea or the Aetherial Realm, but he is more favorable to us in the Summer Lands, and often projects a fierce, unyielding face in Pangaea or a distant, almost immaterial aspect in the Aetherial Realms.

Falcon carries our requests and stories to Helios. He is the messenger between the Celestine Lord and our earthly kingdoms. All that we have achieved for Gaia is due to Falcon's boons. Those who say we are imperious and power-hungry fail to understand that, although we are lords of the Garou, we ourselves swear fealty to Helios through Falcon. We are but servants of the heavens.

A host of Falcon's broodmates aids us in our work. Each is tied to Falcon through a hierarchy of roles, much as we ourselves maintain within our courts. The list of such hierarchies among Falcon's Brood was recorded in the *Amber Accounts of the Aerial Reaches*, so called because a Theurge of Clan Crescent Moon originally carved it onto blocks of amber many ages ago.

You of course have already encountered Firebird, the totem patron of my sept in Russia. He is a wise totem, the keeper of secrets and lore. His cousin is the Phoenix, herald of prophecy, who patrons no Garou as totem but instead watches over the entire Garou Nation, warning us of the coming doom.

Every Silver Fang knows of Merlin, Wyvern and Heron, spirits of respect, war and wisdom. They help us to bolster our courage, to punish our foes and to seek wisdom where it is least expected. Many packs seek their patronage.

The Great Flock, also called the Talons of Horus, is composed of many raptors, for all are broodmates to Falcon. Silver Fangs may sometimes summon the flock, but must be wary when doing so, for it is easily riled and hard to control. Its members are likely to judge others on their own terms, not necessarily those of the Fangs.

Nightmane Speaks:

Falcon does not only fly by day; he also hunts by night. He has many night spirits in his brood, although they are less martial than our tribe usually prefers. One such spirit is Firefly, the lantern of the night, a being who can lead the lost to home or to trace the hidden leys and airts of the world or the Umbra. He is favored by mystics and travelers.

Another spirit is Moth, especially in her lunar aspect. She is considered weak by most Garou, but that discounts her great value: Moth can lead anyone out of darkness to light, and so can lead the dead from the Underworld to the spirit world. She also listens and hears all that is said in the dark of night, when even the moon does not shine, and can share that knowledge with those who petition her properly.

Our tribe does not only follow Helios; it also follows Luna, although she does not easily lend her brood to aid us. Nonetheless, we can now and then win over a Lune or Moonbeam to transport us through the airts of the Umbra.

Auspices

Lord Byeli Speaks:

Before ever our tribe pledged itself to Helios, we ran under Luna's banner. Like all Garou, we are beholden to the phases of the moon. They form our identities and tell us our place in society. Each knows his moon intimately, for it tugs at his heart when in the sky, even stirring his Rage.

Since we made pact with Falcon, we use our auspices to honor him. Indeed, one of his reasons for extending his patronage was so that he could turn the phases of the moon to his own ends — for all creatures rely on the moon when hunting by night.

Ragabash — Falcon's Eyes

Our tricksters serve as the eyes of Falcon, searching keenly in the darkness for things others might overlook. They see new patterns and movements where others see monotony and stasis. Although it is rare for them to attain a throne, Ragabash traditionally served as seneschals, before the Wyrm's depredations forced us to rely on Ahroun for that post.

Our tribe appreciates humor less than some others. This is not because we don't wish to laugh and make merry; it is because our duty lies so heavy on our shoulders that it is hard to endure the distraction of laughter, no matter how much we may need it. Kings of old had official jesters to remind them when their solemnity risked the morale of the tribe, but most courts no longer have such a post.

Theurge — Falcon's Ears

The mystics of our tribe serve as Falcon's ears, listening careful for the whispered sounds of the spirits brushing against the walls of the worlds. In the sounds of their speech or movement, the Theurges interpret patterns of prophecy or gain insight into vexing questions. It is uncommon for Theurges to sit the throne, but those who have done so exhibited strange wisdom that many only came to understood well after their reign was over. Queen Tvarivich is a Theurge.

The shamans of the Sun and Moon Lodges are always Theurges. They serve the Celestines and their broods, ensuring that the will of the spirits is always heard in court.

Philodox — Falcon's Wings

These philosophers are like Falcon's wings, for they uplift us and keep us above the petty conflicts of other tribes, focusing our intent always on the greater picture. Their thoughtful ways seek compromise where others see only conflict, and they counsel necessity when others seek avoidance. A great number of our kings and queens have come from this auspice, and their reigns are noted for their longevity if not valor.

The stewards of the Sun and Moon Lodges are always Philodox. Their temperaments best suited to organizing the efforts of others, picking each for the best of his abilities rather than the honey in his words.

Galliard — Falcon's Beak

The bards serve as Falcon's beak, crying out the message of honor to the entire world, but also skewering falsity with piercing insight and action. Their courage to speak their minds no matter the cost is in honor of Falcon, who can never be silenced. He rarely speaks, but when he does, all beings listen. And so too with our bards; they perform less often than Galliards of other tribes, but their tales are ornately wrought, designed to last the ages.

Galliards do not often sit upon a throne; those who do serve as kings often prove themselves to be well liked and popular among their subjects, hated by their enemies.

The squires of the Sun and Moon Lodges are always Galliards. They are the lorekeepers, most given to cataloguing the heroes and fetishes of the tribe, and giving voice to their deeds.

Ahroun — Falcon's Talons

Finally, the warriors of the Silver Fangs are Falcon's talons, rending our prey or catching it tightly in our grip so that it does not escape our justice. Nothing can sway such a warrior from his duty and his accuracy is unerring, like Falcon's dive. Most of our kings have been Ahroun, for the duty of leading other Garou requires might and muscle, and implacable resolve. They face numerous challenges and must win them all. The wisest coax their rivals into calling the challenge so that they can declare the terms; Silver Fangs rarely choose gamecraft to decide leadership issues.

Most seneschals of the tribe are now Ahroun. In the past, when the world was not as imperiled as today, Ragabash took this role, but no more. It is the Ahroun who are most capable of the challenge of seconding a king.

Nightmane Speaks:

It's well and good to give Falcon his due, but we must not forget that these birthrights were a gift from Luna. The fruits of their endeavors must ultimately be her due. The Lodge of the Moon works in its ceremonies to remind Luna that we remember, and honor her every time our auspice moon rides in the sky.

Customs

Lord Byeli Speaks:

Our customs are our life's blood. Without them, we would be little more than petty lords scrambling to hold what power we could over the other tribes. With the force of tradition, years upon years of ritual and ceremony, we need not struggle: Keep to the ways, and the rest will follow. The ancient trials, triumphs and secrets of many successful lords are embedded in our traditional lore. It is this link to the past, reinvigorated by visits from our ancestors, that keeps us from making the mistakes of the past.

Different houses adopt different customs, but certain customs are universal to our tribe. I shall try to discuss only those universal customs here. There are many sources for these, but the three most well known are two books and one pictogramic saga. The books are *The Trail of Elder Days*, originally composed around the same time Hammurabi wrote his first laws, and *Powers and Privileges*, composed by House Gleaming Eye in the early Middle Ages but adopted by many other houses, including Wyrmfoe. The other source, the pictogramic saga, is carved onto the walls of the Caern of the Crescent Moon in the Ural Mountains of Russia. It holds some of the oldest known writings of the Garou.

The Trail of Elder Days is a bare list of ceremonies to be performed during certain tasks, most of them involved in the day-to-day functioning of a caern or the common rules of hospitality that should be observed between Silver Fang septs or the septs of other

tribes. It is, in a sense, the bible of our ceremonial customs. It has been added to now and then over the years, but not often. Any Silver Fang anywhere in the world will recognize a ceremony from this book.

Powers and Privileges discusses certain ceremonies but mainly concerns itself with advice on leadership. It contains kernels of the courts or styles of leadership we discussed with the Sun and Moon Lodges. It has been adopted into common use by most Western Silver Fang houses, but is not used by Wise Heart, the Blood-Red Crest or even the Crescent Moon. Nonetheless, their people will usually recognize ceremonies and customs from this book.

Ceremonies

Unlike rites, ceremonies are not performed for any supernatural or magical purpose. They are social rituals designed to remind us of our tradition and to maintain consistency of culture across vast geographic distances. They are also performed to please Helios and his sense of order and propriety. He bids us to maintain well-ordered days, and so we formalize many common functions, from greeting guests, laying out a dinner table, to extinguishing the lamps at night.

Kings or lords rarely perform these ceremonies; their practice is the function of those Silver Fangs who have no more important post or who clearly have a talent for formality. However, even though all Fangs are not required to know the leading of such ceremonies, they are required to know their practice, for not a day goes by that we do not take part in ceremonies of some sort, be they calling the quarters for a daily briefing on the state of a caern or merely thanking Helios for a sunny rather than a cloudy day.

All too often, these ceremonies are practiced with empty precision and no passion or meaning. Many of them have lost their meanings, tied to some ritual of the past whose purpose is lost to us. Hence, the other tribes claim we merely observe empty ritual, a not entirely untrue accusation. Would that it were otherwise.

Nightmane Speaks:

The Lodge of the Moon is as concerned with ceremony as the Sun Lodge, but in a different manner. We are more concerned with true rituals than formal ceremonies, although we do practice a number of these in our proceedings and at court. But the obsession with ceremony in every aspect of life is more a trait of the Sun Lodge. Do not mistake this trend for the highly sacred, ritualized lives of other tribes, such as the Uktena or Wendigo. These ceremonies are done less to celebrate ancient patterns laid down by spirits than to formalize methods of getting things done. I believe you Westerners have a phrase: "How anal."

The Rite of Kingship

Lord Byeli Speaks:

We practice many of the same rites as do the other tribes, but we have a prime rite that they do not: the Rite of Kingship. They may have similar rites whereby they recognize new leaders, but they are not the same. The Rite of Kingship recognizes a king before the Sun and the Moon, ordained with an ancient privilege from the Dawn of Time, untarnished by the ages.

The rite takes an entire day and night to perform, as you well know, my lord. The time chosen for the rite is usually the first waxing phase of the new king's auspice. It is a bad omen if, during the day portion of the rite, the sun does not appear. Custom then usually demands that the new king perform some penance for Helios, to gain his favor.

If there are two or more claimants to the throne, the Lodges of the Sun and Moon gather with the seneschal and discuss the merits of all applicants. If any applicant is found unworthy by those in attendance, he is removed from candidacy. Those remaining must determine who is to be king by challenge. It is usually a game of cat and mouse to see who will lose his temper first and challenge the other, allowing the challenged the choice of terms. Those kingly applicants who choose gamecraft — and win — are often seen as weak kings, unless they can prove themselves strong during their rule.

Needless to say, the winner of the challenge is given the title and participates in the Rite of Kingship performed for him by the shamans of the lodges, with his sept's Ritemaster also in attendance, if he or she is not also one of the shamans.

Nightmane Speaks:

There are times when confusions arise and the outcome is unclear. I have been told the full tale of your rise to the throne by your septmates, and know that Arkady won the challenge against you, but could not win the Silver Crown, which proved him ultimately unworthy to rule. You see, rare spiritual artifacts like the Crown, or spiritual events, such as a sudden solar or lunar eclipse during the Rite of Kingship, can throw the results into turmoil, calling the legitimacy of the king-to-be into question. We adhere to tradition and custom but recognize that it can be overturned by the will of the spirits.

Moots and Celebrations

Lord Byeli Speaks:

We sometimes attend the moots of others, to discover what is going on in their tribes and to add legitimacy to those events that they deem cross tribal boundaries. We are not always welcome, but tradition sometimes allows us to attend nonetheless. It is up to each Silver Fang to determine whether or not pressing this issue is a wise idea.

When necessary, we hold moots to gather all our subjects in an area together and impart a mission or task on them, especially if a Wyrm menace threatens the area.

We hold two major events each year, at the two solstices. The Lodge of the Moon holds the Winter Solstice celebration, and all other Garou are invited. It is a time for fun and passion, one of the few moments when we allow ourselves to smile and play. We even allow members of other tribes to mock us with masks and performances, laughing even at the most ridiculous impersonations of our solemnity. At these times, the Shadow Lords try to test our jollity by turning good-natured jest into grave insult, but we endeavor to hold down our Rage and laugh it off, even calling upon spirits of laughter beforehand to turn our snarls into smiles. This does not always work, however, and fights have broken out, but even the most low of Shadow Lord leaders rarely condones their followers' provocations, and breaks up the fight by departing.

The Summer Solstice is held by the Lodge of the Sun and is open only to fellow Silver Fangs. It is our time to renew our oaths to Helios and Luna and pledge our faith to them again, thankful for their unwavering loyalty over the centuries.

Nightmane Speaks:

The Winter Solstice is more than a time to celebrate with the other tribes; it is a chance to learn their secrets. Our Lodge uses the informality of the moot to engage others in seemingly innocent conversations, genuinely interested in the great deeds going on in their septs. As we learn ever more, we gently and subtly dig ever deeper for more secrets. Eventually, from all the guests at the moot, one or two will inadvertently tell us something they meant to keep secret. We play dumb that we learned anything, and wait — if possible — until many months later to use the information, to convince the accidental speaker that we heard nothing, so that he does not keep his guard too high for the next solstice.

I realize this sounds scandalous, but it is how a kingdom is ruled. A king should never stoop to use such tactics; that is what we are here for.

The Litany

Lord Byeli Speaks:

Our tribe was most responsible for the Concord and the Litany. We could not rule all the tribes from afar, so we felt it best to give them firm guidelines with which to rule themselves until emissaries from our tribe could join them or migrate to nearby territories. We had no idea of the wealth of interpretations such simple laws could create. Children are quite creative when avoiding rules their parents set for them; the other tribes are as children when it comes to honoring our rules.

Of course, we did not create the Litany ourselves. Gaia inspired it, and is Her law given shape in words. To breach any tenet of it is to sin against Gaia. As the initial translators and enforcers of Her will, our "interpretation" of the Litany is clearly the most correct.

Garou Shall Not Mate With Garou

All Garou know the punishment for breaking this tenet: the birth of a metis Garou. These poor creatures bring shame on us all, for they are living reminders that we cannot control our passions in the name of Gaia. Those who commit such sin should be singled out and marked for it: the sigil of the oathbreaker should be carved into their backs, where they cannot erase it. As for the metis, they are not to blame, but neither should they be held as anything but impure. They should be given a place in Garou society, but among the lowest.

Combat the Wyrm Wherever It Dwells and Whenever It Breeds

Self-evident. Of all the tribes, we have done the most to rally the Garou Nation against the Wyrm and its incarnations. We suffered the most in the early days from its depredations, staying to fight its armies so that others could escape into new, free territories. But the Wyrm soon arrived in these other lands, and the tribes had to fight them on their own, without our leadership. Some did well and proved themselves worthy, while others failed and died.

The other tribes have taken to accusing us of such quaint things as "insanity" and "madness." This is raw cowardice. They fear to tackle the Wyrm when we've identified it and so come up with any excuse to avoid fighting it. They say we are the last to attack, ordering other tribes to lead the assaults. Untrue. If we are not in the frontlines, it is because our kind must survey the entire battlefield and direct the assaults of many.

Respect the Territory of Another

Technically speaking, with the voice of ancient authority, all lands are ours. We are the leaders of the

Garou Nation. The others hold their lands by our sufferance. The truth of the matter is we can no longer enforce this on the other tribes, who have taken our lack of enforcement as endorsement of their claims. If and when we feel it is necessary to reclaim our lands, we shall do so. Until then, we practice realpolitik and respect these tribes' territories as if they were their own.

If we are to be exemplars of the Litany, we must show an example to the other tribes as to how they should behave. By respecting their territories as if they were theirs, the other tribes will do the same with our territory and the territories of other tribes, and so maintain truce among our kind.

Accept an Honorable Surrender

One of the most misused tenets of the Litany by others, and yet, to us, it is one of the most inviolate. As the children of Falcon, honor is our watchword. If one acts with honor, he is to be accorded honor. There is no other acceptable interpretation. If the person is known to be dishonorable even if he speaks with honor, we are under no obligation to treat him honorably — we aren't fools. But those who are truly honorable are due our respect.

It is easy to accept an honorable surrender from a low-class Garou. It is hard to offer one. If we should lose a challenge to an honorable person, we should honorably tender our surrender. It is not easy, of course, and too many of us often choose never to surrender, no matter the honor involved.

Submission to Those of Higher Station

Another obvious and inviolate tenet. As lords of the entire Garou Nation, our tribe naturally has the higher station, even if the other tribes refuse to accept it at times. We deserve their submission, although we have come not to expect it. Realpolitik again.

We must also recognize the hierarchies of others, however. Even though we are their lords, they have their own tribal and pack structures that we should respect. Hence, one who holds higher rank than we deserves our submission, even if he be a Shadow Lord. This tenet will mean little to you, oh king, for there are none higher in station than you on this continent, and perhaps only one in the world your equal or better: Queen Tvarivich. There is, of course, the Shadow Lord Konietzko, but your relation with him is of your higher to his lesser, unless you choose to pretend he is an equal for the purposes of realpolitik.

The First Share of the Kill for the Greatest in Station

This is a traditional tenet meant to enforce the right of leaders as leaders. Rarely do they ever accept the first share, most often graciously giving it to he that caught it. But the ceremony must be maintained, to keep us from complete anarchy.

By "kill," this tenet refers not only to prey, but also to things: treasures and artifacts found or won. By right, the leader has first pick of any hoard.

Ye Shall Not Eat the Flesh of Humans

The Animal Elders all made pacts in the Dawn Times determining who could eat whom. The humans made no such pact, for they had no Elder spirit to make such a decision for them. They were alone, with only those allies they could make in the world or those spirits who took pity on them. No wonder they fared so poorly, without the guidance of an Elder spirit.

It is unwise to eat the flesh of any being whose Elder did not make such a pact. Not only does it risk the anger of that Elder, it risks Wyrm-taint — for it is a practice of the Wyrm to eat anything, especially the pactless. Eating humans is especially tainted, for it mimics the devouring hunger of the Eater-of-Souls. For this reason, we do not suffer any Garou to eat human flesh, be he homid or lupus.

Respect Those Beneath Ye — All Are of Gaia

This is a hard tenet, for it is not always easy to show respect to those who break the Litany. And yet, it is our duty to do so. We rule not by might alone, but through the grace of the Sun and Moon, at the behest of Gaia. We do not rule out of self-aggrandizement or egotism. Hence, it matters not whether they truly respect us; we shall show respect to them. It is the proper thing to do.

It is, nonetheless, difficult.

The Veil Shall Not Be Lifted

We learned this lesson long ago when we first walked among humans in their own shapes. They cannot abide to see us in our glory — such was the price of breaking the Weaver's curse, when we turned against those we had taught and slaughtered their leaders. Nonetheless, this tenet is often broken these days, for it is harder and harder to combat the Wyrm wherever it dwells and wherever it breeds without doing so in plain sight of humans — for the Wyrm most often nests among them.

For some reason I have yet to uncover, many of our kind suffer from Harano, the desolate despair that prevents them from acting proactively against whatever assails them. Perhaps this is because of the many losses our tribe has suffered over the years, or the crushing weight of responsibility we bear for the welfare of the entire Garou Nation. Regardless, some of these afflicted individuals have outright ignored

this tenet, forcing us to hunt them down and incarcerate them.

Do Not Suffer Thy People to Tend Thy Sickness

Many claim that we ignore this tenet. Of course, these are the same fools who accuse us of madness. They say that, by allowing our mad rulers to maintain their thrones, we are "tending their sickness." Certainly, there have been those rulers who have become decidedly unhinged, such as your predecessor and Queen Tvarivich's father. I know not the cause of this disease, but it is nowhere near as endemic as the other tribes claim.

Hence, I see no breach of this tenet. Were a king to become truly ill, beyond a cure, then yes, he must be deposed. But this is a rare thing, and has not happened of late.

Nightmane Speaks:

Lord Byeli has perhaps the most common form of madness among us: willful ignorance. He knows as well as you or I that our kind is indeed suffering from an insanity that grows worse. He does not wish to accept it. If your sept had heeded this tenet earlier, perhaps you would have been king without need of the Silver Crown.

The Leader May Be Challenged at Any Time During Peace

Lord Byeli Speaks:

Certainly, kings may be challenged. Even Falcon reminded us of this when he offered his pact. But it is not our custom to do so. For one, times of peace are rare. It is a grave risk to overturn successful leadership just because the Litany allows for it. Of course, if leadership is not successful, then yes, Silver Fangs are free to attempt to depose their leaders. However, we furnish our kings with the greatest fetishes and Gifts known to our tribe; they are not easy to challenge.

Other tribes have, at times, sought to use this tenet to overthrow our rule of the Garou Nation. Ridiculous. This tenet was designed to allow the "alpha" to be overthrown by his better if he grows weak or old, not to abrogate our sacred relationship to Helios and Luna as the only divine leaders of the Garou.

The Leader May Not Be Challenged During Wartime

Inviolate. To do so is an act of idiocy, for who would risk changing rule during a time of martial crisis? That every hour of every day is now a time of war is inarguable. Hence, the previous tenet is almost never applicable. It is always war, until the ash of the Apocalypse fires settles and a new world dawns.

Ye Shall Take No Action That Causes a Caern to Be Violated

Caerns are too sacred too allow to come to harm. The other tribes interpret "violation" many different ways. We, however, see what it clearly means: do not let another misuse a caern, whether it be to allow the Wyrm to come too close or to fail to use its resources to defend Gaia. This latter is one of the main reasons we had to take over caerns in certain places in Europe and the Americas. The other tribes howled in rage at our "presumption," but the Litany clearly calls for action in such matters. To sit on a caern and refuse to use its power to fuel the fight against the Wyrm is as much of a violation as is allowing the Wyrm to take up residence within it.

Kingdoms of the World

There are many places in the world under our influence — there are many more places that are not. We cannot personally rule every territory; we must leave some of these areas in the care of the other tribes, as much as we are loath to accept their definitions of "care."

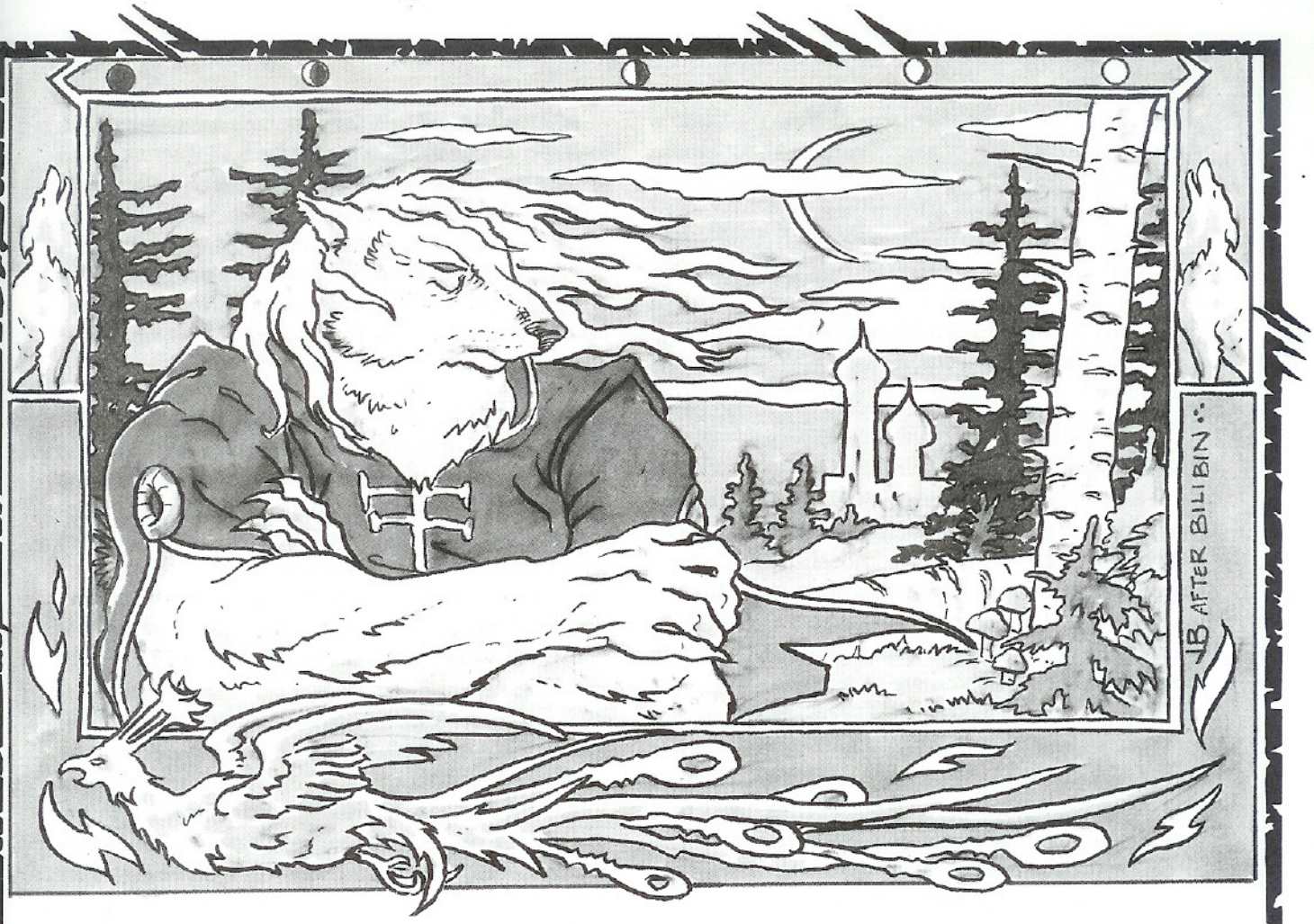
I speak here only of our kingdoms, those areas clearly acknowledged by Silver Fangs and other tribes as being under our jurisdiction. Know that many adjacent areas are under our nominal, if not actual, rule.

Russia — The Mother Country

We are strong once more in the beloved Mother Country, homeland of the Silver Fangs. Queen Tamara Tvarivich leads the Sept of the Crescent Moon, holding the oldest caern in the world, in a lush valley within the Urals, untouched by humans.

My adopted sept, the Firebird Sept, commands a caern in Zagorsk. The other tribes respect and accept our role as "First Among the Greatest," recognizing that we have lived up to our promise as leaders and protectors of the Garou Nation. We were in the forefront of the worst fighting here, and Queen Tvarivich was instrumental in slaying one of the Zmei. Arkady also led many victories, before finally proving himself instrumental in destroying the dragon of Croatia, Jo'clatth'mattric.

The Shadow Curtain, erected by the dreaded Hag, Baba Yaga, closed our country off for many years. We could not leave, for a strange barrier prevented our travel and even impeded our very intent to escape. Only our Kinfolk could come and go, provided our enemies did not know them for who they were. Some were discovered and killed crossing the borders, and so we forbade any Kin to leave. Even spirits could not



penetrate the Curtain, and so we were trapped for years under a dark blanket of evil.

But we never succumbed. A few of us fell to Harano, but the majority forged on, battle by battle, refusing to yield to the army of Leeches that hunted us. Finally, the tide turned against the Hag. She was devoured by forces unknown to us, but we used the confusion of her death to tear a hole in her allies' defenses they could never repair. Broken and scattered, we hunted them across all of Russia, killing them one by one. Some escaped us, but we are eternally vigilant for their return. They shall not escape a second time.

With Queen Tvarivich uniting the country once more, your journey to greet her, my lord, comes at a most auspicious time. Again, I entreat you to first meet with my sept leader, Rustarivich, who can act as guide for you in the Mother Country.

Nightmane Speaks:

Lord Byeli minces his words. I will speak straight. We ask that you, King Albrecht, meet with our leader and make alliance with him. He will stand beside you when you meet Tvarivich. That way, you come with a stance of power and backing, not as a foreigner ignorant of the balance of power in the Mother Country. The queen will not be pleased, but she will understand and respect you for it. Know this: we dearly love the queen, but we do not wish our own lord to become but a steward to her power. He must stand separate to her, an ally, not a lordling. You are his best ally in this, oh king.

Western Europe

Lord Byeli Speaks:

I have already spoken of the troubles in England between Houses Gleaming Eye and the Austere Howl. Most of their caerns are now in Gleaming Eye hands, held, of course, only until their former lords can prove themselves capable of keeping them from Wyrm taint. But most of those lords do not show their faces, hiding with their queen.

France is ruled mainly by Gleaming Eye also, as is Spain. Greece still has a Wise Heart sept, but none have heard from it since the terrible appearance of Jo'clatth'mattric. Their Black Fury neighbors have told us they still exist, but that they simply desire solitude, recovering from wounds suffered in the recent wars.

The other tribes of Europe accept the Silver Fang's traditional rule and presence with little com-

plaint. They have been there since before the Middle Ages, after all. They spread ugly rumors about House Gleaming Eye's tactics, however, and some Silver Fangs suspect that these other tribes, the Children of Gaia of Provence in particular, are sheltering members of the Austere Howl. If this is true, Gleaming Eye will not long accept such impertinence — these tribes have no business interfering with tribal affairs, especially when the accusation of Wyrm taint has been levied. Those caught harboring Austere Howl Fangs will be punished.

The Middle East

The septs ruled by House Wise Heart in Turkey, Iran and a few other Middle-Eastern countries are our only caerns in these lands. We know little about how Wise Heart maintains these septs against the human hegemony of the region. It would be an interesting course of study to find out. Perhaps once my duty to my sept is finished, I will go there to see for myself.

Nightmane Speaks:

I am wary of King Tariki, for he is an Ivory Priest and I fear he delves into secrets not meant for Garou. The secretive nature of his septs worries me. I find myself wishing that Gleaming Eye would pay less attention to the already broken Austere Howl and turn its attention to this mysterious house's activities.

The Americas

Lord Byeli Speaks:

I know something of this country, as I studied it before my sojourn in Russia. I gathered what news I could upon my return to the West, but I still surely know less than you, my lord. Perhaps you could turn the tables and lecture me on this territory?

"Yeah, sure," Albrecht said, sitting up from his slouch. "Let's see. You got the North Country Protectorate here, ruled by me. House Wyrmfoe territory. Down south, Virginia way, not too far from D.C., there's another Wyrmfoe sept, keeping an eye on the political class, so to speak.

"Up north, in Canada, you get Unbreakable Hearth territory. They also have a big caern near Chicago, from where their king rules. He's a decent guy. Cyrus-the-Bald. I like him, although I can't say we get together that often. His people have another sept out West, Colorado way.

"That brings me to the other Wyrmfoe sept, the one in Northern California. It's not big, but it's earnest. It's the only one of ours in the States run by lupus. They aim to keep loggers out of the old growth forests, and are leading a multi-tribe effort there. I lend them what help I can."

"I see," Lord Byeli said. "And what would you say are the most pressing threats in America?"

"That's easy: Defiler Wyrm. I think it's got its claws in deeper here than in Europe. It feeds on ignorance, and we sure give it a lot of that. Of course, we also give it more grief than I think it would get in Europe: we don't sit on our hands debating what to do or getting a coalition together; we just roll up our sleeves and charge the damn thing wherever we find it. Finding it's the tough part, because it thrives on secrecy."

The East

Lord Byeli Speaks:

The only other region of note for our kind is the East, in which I include Australia. Members of the Austere Howl still rule there, angrily denying Gleaming Eye's charge of Wyrm-taint. They have even dared King Calvin to make such an accusation to their faces. It's a challenge they want, but Gleaming Eye doesn't have the resources to give it to them so far across the world.

There are also some Silver Fangs from the Blood-Red Crest in Australia, ruling among their Asian immigrant Kinfolk, but they have nowhere near the power base of other tribes. Their main power is still in India, but that is where they suffer their tragic curse, where none can seem to bear true cubs. One can clearly see that, if this keeps up, there will soon be no Silver Fangs in India. I believe that Tvarivich is aware of this, and has spoken to some of her people about immigrating there, to see if they can help the Blood-Red Crest and, if not, to take over their caerns before they lose them due to lack of defenders.

Throughout the rest of Asia, our tribe is rare. This is Stargazer territory, and also that of the courts of the Eastern Fera, who are far more united here against our kind than elsewhere.

Ruling the Garou Nation

We suffer our role as leaders with equanimity, for the most part. Being a leader means being cruel at times — or so it can seem to others who don't understand the full import of our duties or the larger picture we are forced to see from our high perch.

If I have made scant mention of the other tribes in my teachings, it is not to slight them. It is just that, since there are so many of them and only one of us, we cannot play favorites, and must treat them all the same. This often means becoming deaf to the continued entreaties of one tribe so that we may listen to the more infrequent whispers of another.

The other tribes will always complain about our rulings, no matter how true or just they may be. We must inure ourselves to this and accept it, not allowing

their complaints to deter us. They interpret this as an insult, a willful ignorance of their wishes or wisdom. Not so. But, you have surely heard of the quaint human parable of the boy who cried wolf. The other tribes have yet to learn that, if they complain about every ruling, good or bad, how can we trust their judgment on any issue? They must prove their discretion and acceptance of proper rulings before they earn our ear when questioning the improper ones.

I shall address each tribe individually. Your American experiences may have taught you different attitudes than I shall present. I can only give you the Old World perspective.

Black Furies

Of all the other tribes, we perhaps respect the Furies the most. Not that we agree with them most of the time — indeed, we rarely ever agree. But their forthright attitude and steadfast stance make them honorable in our eyes. However, they despise our "patriarchal" system. Although they are deferent to our queens, they still seem to prefer rule by a council of elders rather than a single, proven king or queen. That is their burden to bear, not ours.

Interestingly, House Wise Heart gets along quite well with them in Greece, although I suspect this is because their septs there do not try to rule Black Fury septs, and instead seem more concerned with introspective studies of ancient history.

Your packmate, Mari Cabrah, strikes me as a fairly typical Black Fury. That you get along so well with her is a good sign for our tribe. I do not understand your smirk. Did I misinterpret something?

Bone Gnawers

The Bone Gnawers at least know their place, unlike the Glass Walkers. They may whine from time to time, but they are uncomfortable in any other position than their role as the least among us. I must say, they fare worse in material circumstance in the New World than they do in the Old, but they seem to be treated better here. A strange turnaround.

They breed with mongrels, both human and wolf. They stink of the sewer and their speech is full of vile invective. And yet, they are ever alert for the faintest scent of the Wyrm. As they live so close to the places it usually breeds — the pits of human misery — they are best positioned to flag its appearance. When they perform this task well, they are due the reward of our favor. If they fail in it, they need to be reminded of their use to us, and why we suffer their presence.

Children of Gaia

Perhaps there was once a place for these gentle Garou, but that world ended long ago, when the Wyrm erupted from its lair, spreading balefire and malaise. We must give no quarter to this foe, and be ever-wary not to award the mercy it craves. The Children of Gaia all too quickly yield to mercy, sparing creatures best slain. We should not coddle or condone such actions, for they endanger us all.

There is, of course, a place for mercy within the Garou Nation, when we deal with errant subjects who do wrong even though their hearts are pure. You exhibited such mercy to our Lord Arkady, and I respect you greatly for it, as it allowed him to return to the Mother Country and help us to free it from tyranny. It allowed him to redeem himself by combat. In this instance, your mercy was wise.

But the Children of Gaia award mercy to everything, with no discrimination or wisdom. Their hearts are still in the Dawn Times. I fear such idealism will be the death of us all.

Fianna

Although their penchant for humor and satire often raises our hackles, we are best to humor them in return, for they are steadfast allies when won to a cause. We must occasionally remind them of their place — something they still refuse to admit — but when they are "on the same page" as we, our alliance is formidable.

The Austere Howl has had an on-again, off-again relationship with this tribe, for they have shared lands for many centuries. That relationship is currently at an end; the Fianna have withdrawn the hospitality offered to that house as it sought to escape House Gleaming Eye's investigations.

Perhaps the thing we respect most about the Fianna is their ability to maintain their ancient culture; it wells up within them unbidden, as if the stories and legends still live as part of their spirits, not separate records written in a book or told only by bards. Their ability to hold onto caerns is also admirable in this age of ever-shifting alliances.

But beware their spontaneity. Before they commit to an affair, they prefer to test it from all angles. Such avoidance of commitment is their flaw.

Get of Fenris

The Get is perhaps the tribe with which we share the strongest heritage, for our tribes have lived closely with one another since ancient times. Their Kinfolk

invaded the Mother Country long ago, and we skirmished with them until the rights to key breeding stock were worked out. More often than not, we have fought side by side to defend caerns the world over from the Wyrm's soldiers.

They still respect our ancient right of rule, which is more than can be said of most tribes. They do not always honor this right, but they recognize it in theory. If our rulers prove themselves honorable and courageous, the Get will more often than not accept their leadership in multi-tribal affairs.

Their flaw is that they do not respect wisdom if it is not accompanied by might. This causes them to see weakness in what others know to be cunning strategy.

Glass Walkers

These fools live in the heart of cities, whereas we prefer the outskirts. We recognize the need to live near to our Kinfolk, so that we can attempt to guide the leaders of humanity, but even we will only sacrifice so much. The Glass Walkers do not see their exile into the Weaver labyrinth as a sacrifice at all: They revel in it.

I suppose there is a certain wisdom here, for the Glass Walkers clearly understand the spirits of human ingenuity and technology better than any other tribe. But I fear they have come to love them too dearly. Where once they were tasked with controlling these spirits to keep them from running rampant throughout the spirit kingdoms, they quickly forgot that duty and instead persuaded these spirits to their own uses. If the Glass Walkers had not proven their capability in foiling the Wyrm many times over, I would call them treasonous.

Red Talons

Respect their raw Rage and lust for combating the Wyrm, but be wary of their hatred of humans, for they often extend it to homid Garou. They, like the Children of Gaia, are relics of an older time. It is a testament to their survival skills that they still thrive in certain areas of the world, but their days are numbered. It is no insult to say this, for all our days are a countdown to doom. I hope for their sake that, in the world to come after the Apocalypse cleanses the Wyrm's taint, there is a place for their kind to live, unmolested by humans.

Shadow Lords

These perfidious fakes once had a duty they took quite seriously: to righteously challenge our leadership, to find the flaws in our methods so that we might fix them and become stronger. In this manner, they served not only our tribe, but also the whole Garou Nation. Somewhere along the way, they mistook their role as adversary and Devil's advocate for the role of heir to the throne. They now believe that their tribe has the right to rule — because, they say, there is no longer any divine mandate for anyone, and hence, only the most capable should rule. This outright spurning of the Celestines' obvious ordination of our tribe is an insult, for it claims that no Garou is so ordained, that each must struggle for himself in a world of individual versus individual, and pack ties be damned.

I fear that other Garou believe their vision is truer than ours. Such is the deception they practice, the vile demagoguery of lies they profess, that even the others have begun to question and to wonder if what they say is true. The irony is that they know the Shadow Lords are liars, but they have come to believe that everyone is a liar — even our tribe! In such a world, why not exalt the best liars among us?

For the sake of Falcon's honor, if not ours, we must shut their mouths before they are allowed to utter further insults. I grant you that this Konietzko everyone speaks highly of in the Balkans seems to be an honorable Lord, but even if so, he is not typical of his tribe.

Silent Striders

Many of us believe that the Striders know the Secret of Death, but I do not believe so. That they have some ability to walk the lands of the dead is undoubted, as is their lore concerning the spirits of the Underworld. But I suspect this comes not from the possession of a secret but from a curse. If they so readily control death, why then do their ancestors not appear to them? It is clear that their spirits do not go to the Umbra we know, but perhaps travel a darker road to the Underworld, to share eternity with forlorn human spirits. Can such a curse be broken? Perhaps only by discovering its cause can this question be answered.

The tribe does produce excellent messengers, and we respect their stoic natures. House Wise Heart surely has more dealings with them than I have had in Russia, but they rarely speak of what they know to other Silver Fangs.

Stargazers

We once sought their wisdom, welcoming them to our court as advisors. Even then, we were fully aware of their penchant for abstraction, and took their advice with caution. Since their defection from the Garou Nation, we don't know what to think. Is this some strange ploy to escape our rule? To go behind our backs and build secret alliances among the tribes? Or is it worse: do they conspire with the other Fera against us?

One thing is true now: do not trust a Stargazer. They may indeed still have much wisdom, but none

can now know if it is genuine or fake. If they have removed themselves from us, their very brethren, what else will they remove themselves from? Gaia Herself? A wolf that walks alone is a suspicious thing; its loneliness may cause it to seek what allies it can — even among the Wyrm's minions.

Uktena

I fully concede this tribe's vast and ancient lore, and respect it. But I do not respect their secretiveness. It is one thing to hide things from the other tribes, another thing entirely to hide them from the rulers of the Garou Nation. Certainly, their Kinfolk's tragic histories have colored their relations with other tribes, but that is no excuse. They need to overcome their reticence and share with us what they know, so that we together may plan sorties against the Wyrm.

We in the Old Country have few, if any, relations with them. Only rarely have their seekers come to our land, digging up secrets or long-buried lore. They inevitably leave once they have found what they sought, and so we are none the wiser about them, although they leave knowing something of us.

Wendigo

Like their older brother tribe, the Wendigo have few relations with us. The Siberakh, a small tribe that claims heritage from both Wendigo and Silver Fangs, still clings to its tiny caerns in the northeastern tip of the Mother Country. They are an interesting group, and seem to combine the best of both our tribes, but this is easy: they rarely go forth into the world to fight the Wyrm, and so can easily keep to ideals that are never tested.

As for the Wendigo, I know little of them except that they are bitter against the European Garou for taking their caerns. We certainly engaged in such conquest, but we also kept others from overstepping their bounds in this, defending the right of the Wendigo to keep their lands to the North. For this, I suspect, they hate us less than the others.

The Fera

What is there to say of any worth about the other Changing Breeds? Since we did them the favor of exiling them to lands still pure with Gaia's wealth while we took the more corrupt territories near to humans, we have had few dealings with them.

In the Mother Country, we of course respect the might and resolve of the Gurahl, but they have done little to decide the fate of that land. While it may be true that their rituals kept the worst of the Hag's magics from despoiling the land, we rarely saw them take the field, and so it is hard to credit them with things we know little about.

The Corax revere the Sun, and so we allow them hospitality in our caerns on those rare occasions when they ask for it. We do not respect the manner in which they "honor" Helios — by thieving for him — but we understand that, at least in their minds, they do so in the name of his majesty.

I myself know next to nothing about the Nuwisha werecoyotes. There are none in Russia, at least that I have ever heard. Likewise the Bastet, who are mainly found in India and other parts of Asia. I do not like their attitudes, but I cannot speak from personal experience. The Blood-Red Crest distrusts them, for their goals are different, but they do not seek to dispossess them of their lands, for they seem to recognize that the werecats fulfill some sort of niche.

There are other Fera in the world, but as I said before, they live in lands far from where we rule. I have heard terrible things about the Ananasi, Wyrm-corrupted werespiders. The very thought gives me chills. If they were ever so bold as to make forays into our lands, we would quickly remind them what klaives can do to Weaver webs.

Nightmane Speaks:

The Lodge of the Moon has had more dealings with the Fera than have the Sun Lodgers, for they tend to travel the Umbra less frequently than do we. We have, on occasion, met Fera in the spirit world, and learned more of their ways.

I believe that the rumors Lord Byeli heard about the Gurahl are true: Their rites do indeed help to maintain the orderly cycles of the spirit world, and hence they affect the material world, too. Were it not for them, the Mother Country might not have survived its years under the Hag's shadow. Truly, there is a reason Russia chose the bear for its symbol.

Supernatural Beings

Lord Byeli Speaks:

There are other supernatural beings besides shapechangers, spirits and Wyrm minions. Some of these creatures do serve the Wyrm, but most do so unknowingly, and not all of their kind are corrupt.

Leeches

Not all humans die; some continue in a mockery of life, their spirits trapped in their bodies, maintained by some powerful Gift or charm we cannot decipher. They prey upon living humans, drinking their blood like spiders feeding on insects. The metaphor is apt, for both beings are associated with the Weaver. She has

somehow cocooned these undead creatures in a form of immortal stasis.

It is our duty to end their existences whenever we are able, but beware: they are masters of deceit, and compete with our tribe to sway humans. It is best to never confront one face to face, for its powers can overwhelm your judgment and twist your will to its own ends. Better to hunt it by day, for these vampires cannot bear the light of Helios. It is said that the Sun cursed them long ago, offended at the manner in which they cheated death. The very touch of his glance turns them to ash.

Another thing about which you must be wary: they have a means by which they control the wills of humans, including our Kinfolk. Watch your human Kin closely so that they never come under the thrall of a Leech.

Wizards

Certain humans become possessed by a type of spirit being we do not yet understand, a seemingly immortal spirit from the far celestial reaches of the Umbra. This thing melds itself to a human soul, and gives it vast powers over all of Gaia's creation. Strangely enough, they do not necessarily stink of the Wyrm, and neither do they all seem to serve the Weaver.

At times, these wizards have appeared in communities over which we watched, and these often seem to work toward the same goals as we. But not all such wizards agree, and some choose instead to master the spirits of technology — or worse, create new ones with but a thought.

It is best to avoid these wizards entirely, unless you are sure you have the upper hand. We cannot predict their powers or their plans. Occasionally, they are seen walking the Umbra, but they more often disappear into the celestial reaches. Sometimes, they do not even walk with bodies, but send their minds floating bodiless through the spirit world. Such a thing should not be.

Nightmane Speaks:

These wizards form tribes among themselves. One such is called the Speakers-to-the-Dream. Of all these wizard tribes, they are the ones most respectful of Gaia's spirits. Indeed, they often ally with these spirits, although in a different manner than we. I still counsel that they are to be avoided, for some of them use their powers to coerce spirits, since they cannot call upon the ancient pacts that garner the spirits' goodwill and service.

Elves

Lord Byeli Speaks:

Although faeries have always been uncommon, they are more rare now than ever. They do not even seem to exist in this world anymore, and the spirit paths to their Realms in the dreamlands are lost. It is as if they were mere dreams, and now their dreamer has awakened and forgotten them. This is sad, for we appreciated their fostering of nature and their gentle laughter, even if we also hated their malicious pranks and refusal to heed our commands.

Nightmane Speaks:

The Mother Country is poorer without the Rusalka and their brethren.

Ghosts

Lord Byeli Speaks:

The Ivory Priesthood has spoken with ghosts, but we do not generally approve of such things. These are human mysteries. Those Garou who delve too deeply into them risk getting drawn into these mysteries, trapped in their labyrinthine enigmas. Was that the curse of the Silent Striders? If so, it would be best for the Ivory Priesthood to respect the Secret of Death but to never invoke it.

Formidable Humans

Now and then, groups of odd humans have appeared to harass our septs. They possess uncanny stamina and resolve with which to withstand our assaults — not to mention the sight of our Crinos forms. We do not know where they come from or whom they serve, but they seem intent on ridding the world of what they deem to be supernatural horrors. We would do best to teach them the lesson of who was here first, and let them remind their brethren never to come near our caerns again. If they persist, then perhaps we shall call the hunt in reverse, and track down these would-be predators, teaching them what their ancestors knew — do not anger the Silver Fangs.

The setting sun cast a red gleam on Albrecht's armor. He tightened the straps on his shoulder-plates and adjusted the position of his sheath, testing to make sure his grand klaive could be drawn at a moment's notice.

"My lord," said Thomas Abbot, Steward of the Lodge of the Sun, bowing his head. "Your entourage is ready, and the Gatekeeper awaits your command to open the Moon Bridge."

Albrecht nodded and turned around, examining the 10 Silver Fang warriors gathered about him. Amidst their

ranks stood Lord Byeli and Nightmane. Standing nearest to Albrecht was Evan Heals-the Past, holding a long spear, and Mari Cabrah, unarmed but looking just as dangerous as the warriors with klaives.

"All right," Albrecht said. "Let's get this show on the road."

"Hold but a moment, lord," Abbot said, approaching Albrecht with a short red cape, embroidered with silver and golden pictograms and edged with fur. "It would not do to arrive without your badge of kingship."

"Holy Gaia, this isn't the Ice Capades. I am not wearing that thing. All it's missing is sequins."

"But it is the traditional robe of office!" Abbot sputtered. "It is customary to wear it when greeting the kings and queens of other houses."

Mari couldn't suppress a laugh. The warriors glared at her as if she had given grave insult. Albrecht scowled.

"You know, that's one custom I think I'm changing. This," he said, tapping the silver band on his head, "is custom enough."

Abbot seemed not to know how to respond. He opened and closed his mouth, and then bowed his head, folding the cape. "As you wish, my lord."

"Okay," Albrecht said, walking forthrightly toward the center of the caern, where the Gatekeeper prepared to open a moon bridge to Europe. "To the Mother Country...."

Mari and Evan fell in behind him, followed by the warriors. Together they entered the silvery-blue light of the Moon Bridge and climbed the lambent arc of its pathway into the dark, starry sky of the spirit world.

Chapter Three: Good Breeding

"I am certainly not one of those who need to be prodded. In fact, if anything, I am the prod."
— Sir Winston Churchill

What sets a Silver Fang apart from any other werewolf in the Garou Nation? What marks her out as a member of the ruling tribe, as part of a dynasty that has ruled in nearly unbroken line for centuries and which has led the Garou Nation to both some of its greatest victories and its most ignoble crimes?

One Fang might tell you that it was all a matter of breeding. The tribe is fanatical about keeping track of its bloodlines and genealogies. Its members even accord each other respect by the degree to which they match the image of the ideal Silver Fang hero: pure silvery white coat, noble features and a strong, tall body. To a degree, it is true. The Red Talons may protect their wolf relatives fanatically and the Fianna integrate their Kin completely into their lives, but no one keeps track of Kinfolk and ancestry like the Silver Fangs. Breeding isn't the whole story, though.

Another Silver Fang might tell you that it is the willingness to seek leadership for the good of all, and not just the leader themselves, that defines the tribe. Again, it is a good point. The Fangs labor under a burden of Luna-induced madness to secure their role as leaders of the Garou. An obscure legend suggests that the tribe gained its name by its willingness to carry klaives against the enemies of Gaia: the original Silver Fangs being another name for those mighty fetishes, which pain the wielder even as they rip into the enemy. The legend is almost certainly apocryphal but it, like so many Garou legends, hides a greater truth: that the Silver Fangs, as a tribe, are generally prepared to undergo privations for the sake of victory.

In the end, though, these things, while they go some way to explaining what makes a Silver Fang a Silver Fang, still fall some way short of the truth. Not every member of the tribe is a glowing example of physical perfection. Some don't even have silvery white coats. Not every Fang is willing or able to take up any form of leadership, even as pack alpha. That's probably just as well. If they were, the whole tribe would probably have torn itself apart by now.

Silver Fang society is as rich and diverse as that of any of the other tribes. It may have a strong Russian heritage and an inclination towards leadership, but the tribe's custom of breeding with the most powerful families in any society has given it a cultural breadth that few outside the Fangs appreciate. Many a would-be King of the Garou has dismissed the Silver Fangs as doddering, half-mad, has-beens. Every one of them has

discovered exactly why the tribe has been able to hang on to power for so long.

One reason for that survival is the tribe's sense of its history and dedication to keeping it alive. The Uktena may hold the secrets of the past and the Fianna its stories. Each Silver Fang, though, is a living piece of heritage, her connection to the heroes known and celebrated and the expectation of her raised to match. It is a difficult destiny to live up to, especially on the eve of the Apocalypse. Yet the tribe stands firm. Falcon has granted the Silver Crown to one of its number once more. Will you character be able to take up the burden as well?

Backgrounds

A Silver Fang defines herself as much by her heritage as by the werewolf she has become. This is one of the sources of conflict between the tribe and the rest of the Garou Nation: A young pup may arrive, carrying an ancient fetish that has been borne by werewolves of her lineage for generations and able to recite her ancestry through the last few millennia or so, and she will demand immediate respect. The natural inclination of most of other Garou is to ask what *she* has done, not who her antecedents were.

This defining aspect of the tribe's nature means that most Silver Fang characters will tend to start off somewhat Background-heavy. As with the other Revised Tribebooks, this chapter provides some guidelines on personalizing your character's Backgrounds so that they match both the character and the tribe. These are not hard and fast rules, just guidelines to spark your own creativity. Part of the joy in playing a Silver Fang is the weight of heritage that comes with them, so really go to town. The more detail you throw into these Backgrounds, the more you will enjoy playing the character to the hilt.

Allies

A Silver Fang's allies usually lie amongst the upper echelons of society. While power and social rank don't always go hand-in-hand, they often do and so these allies will usually be well placed in the local human social hierarchy, or at least wish that they were, and will thus be willing to help the character in the hope of later patronage.

It's also common for Silver Fangs to have allies from their own tribe or others. After all, they are the leaders of the Garou Nation. Even in these dark days on the eve of the Apocalypse, when doubt can assail the heart of the stoutest werewolf, there are those that are willing to stand by the historic rulers of the Garou, despite their faults.

Ancestors

This is a prestigious Background amongst the Fangs; not exactly more common, but those cubs that show the gift are encouraged to develop it as much as they can through proper reverence and mediation. With the tribe's obsession over its own lineage, ritual contact with the spirits of its ancestors is very much an everyday part of its spiritual life. It's certainly possible that the obsession with genealogy doesn't end with death and that the Silver Fang ancestor-spirits are likely to make themselves available to their descendants, even over many generations, so that the wisdom of the line does not get lost through one unfortunate untimely death. Silver Fang record keeping being what it is, a character usually knows exactly what relationship he has with his particular ancestor-spirits.

Contacts

Don't fall into the trap of having your character's contacts all be amongst the wealthy, aristocratic and powerful. Even if the character himself is from that sort of a background, he will encounter many different sorts of people through his life, be they people he's met through school, employment or indulgence of their particular vices. There's no doubt, for example, that some Silver Fangs have contacts amongst the criminal fraternity that would put the Bone Gnawers or Glass Walkers to shame. After all, there's nothing a successful criminal likes more than trying to gain an aura of respectability by hob-nobbing with the aristocracy. Be creative: The sort of life your character has led influences the choice of contacts, and vice versa.

Fetish

Fetish is a very common Background amongst Silver Fang characters. The tribe probably possesses more klaives and other fetishes, handed down through bloodlines, than any other tribe can claim. The tribe's reputation for leadership, and propensity for leading from the front, have lead to a great number of fetishes being made which support those roles: boosting the Fang's leadership abilities, their prowess in combat or their survivability when charging headlong into a knot of Wyrmspawn at the head of a pack.

Obviously, many such fetishes have been lost down through the years, usually on the occasions when the Wyrmspawn proved to be just too strong. Many Silver Fangs whose child has undergone a First Change undertake a quest with their pack to try, often guided by an ancestor-spirit, to reclaim one of these lost fetishes as a coming of age gift for their progeny. On other occasions, the family keeps the fetish of a fallen Fang unused until

a new werewolf is born into the line, at which point they take up the family heirloom.

Kinfolk

The Silver Fangs keep a closer watch over their Kinfolk than the vast majority of the tribes, save the Fianna, perhaps. The Silver Fang genealogists, usually but not always Kinfolk themselves, keep track of lineage and births with an almost ruthless efficiency, which was born out of necessity. As the Fangs have always bred with the ruling class of human cultures, rather that the whole mass of a culture, they only ever have a small and close stock of Kin to breed with in any particular nation.

This Background is common in Silver Fang characters and usually represents the character's own immediate family and relations. If not, it more than likely represents close friends, old school friends from one of the Silver Fang Academies and slightly more distant relations actively at work in the local Sept.

Mentor

Mentoring is common amongst the Silver Fangs. Once again, it's a function of the tribe's obsession with its bloodlines. Mentors are, whenever possible, direct blood relations of the young cub, there to both advise them in the ways of Silver Fang life and educate her in her own family's story and heritage. Grandparents or granduncles and grandaunts are the most common choices for mentors, but if no such werewolf is available, any close elder blood relation will do.

Pure Breed

Breeding is central to the way Silver Fangs view the world and themselves. Every Silver Fang character must have at least three dots in this Background, and many have even more. The tribe devotes significant time to tracking and recording its genealogies and thus probably has a good idea who a particular character's ancestors are back through many, many generations. It also means, as noted above, that the tribe keeps a very careful track of its Kinfolk and thus can keep the breeding pool pure.

This obsession has led to purity of breed becoming a mark of the potential worth of a werewolf. The purer his blood, and the more he looks like the idealized image of a Fang, the more easily the rest of the tribe will give him respect. The late Lord Arkady was a perfect example of this. Members of the tribe were ready to disbelieve the many (and often justified) allegations made against him, simply because he was widely believed to be the purest Silver Fang born in generations,

Resources

Many werewolves expect a Silver Fang to have wealth to match her nobility. Often, they're wrong. An aristocratic heritage is more important to the tribe than wealth, which it views very much as a secondary or tertiary concern and one that is both redolent of the Weaver's touch and a symbol of the rise of the mercantile classes, usurpers of the true ruling class. Thus, it is very difficult to generalize about this background. Some Fangs are indeed fabulously wealthy. Some, born of a family that has fallen on hard times, but whose blood is still pure, have little more than the clothes on their backs.

Even amongst the more successful Kinfolk families, much of their wealth is often invested in land and property, to help protect it from the ravages or property developers unwittingly doing the Wyrm's work, and to enhance caern security. Individual members of the family only get as much money as their role and status demands they have. The tribe has bigger things to be concerned about than its members' disposable incomes.

Rites

As one might expect from a tribe that values both tradition and heritage so highly, rites are an important part of the tribe's social structure. As one Bone Gnawer Ragabash once commented, not only do the Fangs conduct rites at the drop of a hat, they have rites for the dropping of a hat. To be fair, the rite in question is actually a symbolic removal of the crown of leadership that bars the werewolf from ever acting as a pack alpha, but the point is a good one. The Silver Fangs don't actually have any more rites than the other tribes do, they're just more committed to using them. Thus, most Silver Fangs end up learning some rites at some point in their lives. Conversely, though, very few young Silver Fangs know any. It is something no one expects them to learn until they have some experience under their belts.

Totem

The Silver Fangs can be somewhat sniffy about their totems, even in mixed packs. As a rule, they dislike totems that don't seem to carry some form of status with them. Falcon and his brood are preferred, of course, in particular those totems that also act as totems to the Silver Fang Houses. They certainly avoid insect totems, if they can do so, and tend to take a lot of ribbing from tribemates if they end up in a pack with one. In particular, though, they dislike totems connected with small mammals. The tribe's affinity with

Falcon leads them to see such animals as prey and beneath their own lofty status. Of course, individual Silver Fangs can see this arrogance for what it is and join a pack with such a totem. He just shouldn't expect much understanding from his peers for doing so.

Gifts

Falcon's brood recognizes the inherent right of the Silver Fangs to rule and thus grants them Gifts that help them fill their appointed role in werewolf society. The Fangs consider these the preserve of the rulers and do not share them with lesser Garou who are not prepared to take up the same burdens and responsibilities.

Members of other tribes who show the right potential, loyalty and responsibility may learn the Fangs' tribal Gifts. However, they may never learn House and Lodge gifts. These Gifts are the result of very carefully constructed pacts between the Houses and Lodges and the spirits in question, and the spirits absolutely refuse to share the knowledge of them with other tribes. House Gifts are occasionally taught to members of other Houses, and a very few Silver Fangs have actually learned Gifts from both Lodges, but precious few have the wisdom to attempt that feat in these final days.

Tribal Gifts

• **Eye of the Falcon (Level One)** — Falcon is a great predator, with keen eyes and a sharp beak. As he soars in the sky, he can spot the tiny movement in the grass that betrays the location of his prey at great distances. He shares this Gift freely with his children so that they may spot their foes easily and lead the Garou into battle with confidence. Any of Falcon's brood may teach this Gift.

System: All visual-based Perception and Alertness rolls are at -1 difficulty. The same applies to all long-range weapon attacks, such as a bow or gun. The Gift costs one Gnosis point to activate, and lasts for a scene.

MET: *Basic* Gift. Spend a Gnosis Trait. For the rest of the scene, the user is up two Traits on all tests related to general vision and perception, and one Trait up on all ranged attacks.

• **Ice Dance (Level One)** — This Gift is a legacy of the tribe's deep roots in Russia and the frozen north. The Wyrm often chooses its battlegrounds with cunning, using Gaia's own snow and ice against Her defenders. This Gift allows the Fangs to face the Wyrm on equal terms, or even turn Gaia's own beauty to their advantage by moving freely across snow and ice, as if it was a flat plain of green grass. An ice elemental teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a single Gnosis point to activate this Gift. Its effects then last until the next sunrise. All Dexterity-based rolls while on ice or snow are at -1 difficulty and the werewolf may move at normal speed across both deep snow and ice. As this is a Gift of balance, Philodox gain more from it than most: their Dexterity rolls on snow and ice are at -2 difficulty and they may double their normal running speed when they are on snow or ice.

MET: *Basic* Gift. With the expenditure of a Gnosis Trait, the Garou ignores the normal penalties for traveling across snow or ice, and in fact is considered one Trait up on all Physical tests made while traveling such surfaces. Philodox users are two Traits up on all relevant tests, and move at twice normal speed across such surfaces. This Gift lasts for the remainder of the session.

• **Reason's Grasp (Level Two)** — The Silver Fangs took up many burdens when they accepted the leadership role for the Garou Nation. One of the hardest of these to bear is the propensity towards Harano and the mental disabilities that beset members of the tribe. However, the spirits took pity upon the tribe members who were suffering and failing at a time of need, so they sent a Firebird spirit to teach them this Gift. Reason's Grasp allows a Silver Fang to free herself temporarily from Harano or mental illness. It can also protect against any sanity-altering attack, be it from a spirit, Wyrm creature, vampire, mage or demon.

System: The player spends a point of Gnosis and rolls Willpower (difficulty 7). The character can ignore the effects of all mental disabilities for a number of scenes equal to the number of successes rolled. Alternatively, each success may reduce by one the number of successes scored on a roll to affect the character's sanity made by an outside agency. Should the unfortunate player botch this roll at any point, the werewolf's dementia runs out of control, completely dominating the character's thought process for 24 hours.

MET: *Basic* Gift. This demanding Gift requires the expenditure of a Gnosis Trait and a number of Simple Tests equal to the Garou's permanent Willpower. For each Simple Test the Garou wins (or ties, if they also expend a Willpower Trait while activating this Gift), they are free from any Derangements they might suffer from for one scene or hour, whichever the Storyteller deems appropriate for their game. Even if they are confronted with stress that would normally trigger their Derangement during this time, they are unaffected, though the player should still roleplay some reaction to such stimuli. In addition, each successful test grants them a retest against any sanity-altering powers used against them, though each retest used in this fashion no longer counts as a success for the purpose of determining the Gift's duration.

• **Talons of Falcon (Level Three)** — Falcon's talons are sharp, allowing him to grasp and impale his prey, before it even realizes that he has swooped. He grants these same talons to the most worthy of his children, so that they may impale their foes upon their claws. This Gift turns a werewolf's claws into wickedly sharp impaling weapons, able to slice through skin and muscle and deep into the entrails of the Fang's foe. A falcon spirit of the Great Flock imparts the secret of this Gift.

System: The player spends a point of Gnosis and makes a Dexterity + Brawl roll to attack, as normal. The attack does Strength + 3 aggravated damage and any attempts to use supernatural healing of any description on the wound are at +1 difficulty. Garou using this Gift often screech like a falcon that has just won its prey as they attack, and many opponents have fallen into fox frenzy when confronted with such a fearsome strike.

MET: *Intermediate* Gift. By spending a Gnosis Trait and emitting a fierce falcon-like screech, the Garou may add two additional levels of aggravated damage to a single claw attack. This Gift may be used as often as the Garou likes, but the Gnosis Trait must be spent *before* the attack challenge is made; if the attack fails, the Gnosis is still spent. This Gift does not work in conjunction with other Gifts that enhance a Garou's claws such as *Razor Claws* or *Silver Claws*; only one may apply for a given attack.

• **The Secret of Gaia (Level Five)** — Some Silver Fang legends tell of a Great White Wolf who gave his own life to save Mother Gaia. He was the ancestor of the Silver Fangs, and of all the werewolves. Those werewolves who rise to the highest rank amongst the tribe sometimes learn the secret that Gaia imparted to the Great White Wolf after his sacrifice, one that deepens their connection to Her and allows them to be completely aware of their surroundings.

Everything about her environment suddenly becomes part of the werewolf's awareness. She can sense the lay of the land, the type and nature of the plants growing on it and what forms of animal life live there. She can sense what spirits are at work in the area's Penumbra. The werewolf also gains some sense of the health of Gaia in that area. In an urban area, she might feel constricted or restrained, while in an area under attack by the Wyrm, she might feel itchy or in pain, depending on how successful the Wyrm minions are.

Any Silver Fang of sufficient rank may learn this Gift, but the majority of those who learn it are Theurges. For some reason, members of House Wise Heart

receive this Gift more frequently than to those of any other House. It is technically possible for a Garou of another tribe to learn this Gift, but it has not happened in living memory, and no song records such an event occurring. Those werewolves who do learn this Gift are often changed as a result. Many choose to walk barefoot on the earth whenever they can, and show a greater than usual aversion to cities. None of them can actually articulate what the secret is, saying that it is either something you understand, or you don't.

System: Secret of Gaia is a more powerful version of the Theurge Gifts Spirit Speech (**Werewolf**, p. 138) and Pulse of the Invisible (**Werewolf**, p. 139) and works in a similar fashion. The player spends a point of Gnosis to activate the Gift and then rolls the character's permanent Gnosis (difficulty 7). The werewolf gains an uncanny awareness of her surroundings for a one-mile radius for every success achieved on this roll, almost integrating her awareness into the very landscape. She can automatically see into the Penumbra and may look at both the Penumbra and the material realm simultaneously if she wishes and can step sideways at -2 difficulty. Some Theurges have likened the experiences to what the world must have been like before matter and spirit separated. All Perception rolls made within that radius are at -3 difficulty. All local spirits that are free of Wyrm taint can sense the character's oneness with Gaia and are well disposed towards her. All social rolls are at -2 difficulty while dealing with spirits. This same oneness grants the player an extra die in all rolls, save those involving combat, that occur while the character is in this state in addition to the other bonuses.

The Gift lasts for one hour for each point of permanent Gnosis the werewolf has. If the roll is a botch, the pain of Gaia overwhelms the character's senses and Harano cripples him for the duration of the scene.

MET: *Advanced* Gift. This effect is largely descriptive, and in essence is a combination of the Gifts *Spirit Speech* and *Pulse of the Invisible*, as outlined above. The Garou must spend a Gnosis Trait to activate this Gift; once it is in effect, she is up two Traits on all tests to cross the Gauntlet, and can automatically see and communicate with any local spirits without difficulty. In addition, the Garou is up three Traits on all tests involving sensory perception due to her acute awareness of her surroundings, and receives a free retest on all friendly Social tests with nearby spirits devoid of Wyrm taint. In addition to these game benefits, the Spirit Keeper should keep the character abreast of any major changes in the spiritual landscape, and at the Narrator's discretion the Garou's intense closeness to the immediate area may occasionally manifest in less direct ways as well, such as receiving premonitions of important events about to occur, sensing impressions of a great triumph (or tragedy) that happened there in the past, and so on. This Gift lasts for one scene per Gnosis Trait the Garou possesses.

House Gifts

Each of the Silver Fang houses has developed its own set of Gifts, some given by their house totem, a member of Falcon's brood with particular affinity for the house, or taught by other spirits to help the house's members. Most of these Gifts can be taught to other Silver Fangs, but not to members of other tribes.

Austere Howl

• **Osprey's Eye (Level One)** — Osprey can spot his prey in the water from high in the air above, despite the distorting effect of the water itself. She gives her children the same ability, so they may hunt the enemies of Gaia as easily in the water as in the air. This Gift is taught by an osprey spirit, or by her ally, Salmon.

System: The player spends a point of Gnosis. For the rest of the scene, the character can see into water as if there was no distortion at work. In addition, if the character is submerged in the water, he is at -2 difficulty to any vision-based Perception roll.

MET: *Basic* Gift. With the expenditure of a Gnosis Trait, the Garou may see into water without penalty; in addition, if actually submerged, the Garou is two Traits up on all tests of visual perception. This Gift lasts for one scene.

• **Osprey's Flight (Level Two)** — When Osprey hunts, she can hover over the water. She wishes her children to hunt over rivers just as easily, so she teaches this Gift to those who prove themselves worthy enough.

System: The player spends a point of Gnosis. For the rest of the scene, the character may move over the surface of a river or lake as if it were solid ground. However, for the character to do anything other than just run across the water, the player must make a reflexive Dexterity + Athletics roll (difficulty 8). Failure sends the unfortunate werewolf to a humiliating bath. This Gift only applies to rivers and other freshwater bodies. It cannot be used on the sea or on saltwater estuaries.

MET: *Basic* Gift. By spending a Gnosis Trait, for the rest of the scene the Garou becomes able to travel on the surface of lakes and rivers without penalty; however, for each turn that she wishes to do anything other than simply walk on the water, she must first make a Simple Test. (*Athletics* may be spent to retest this challenge.) Failure means that she immediately

falls into the water, though she may still act that turn. This Gift does not work at sea, nor does it allow the Garou to cross saltwater of any kind.

• **Austere Mind (Level Two)** — The Silver Fangs of House Austere Howl have always valued self-control. To this end, they successfully petitioned a stone elemental to teach them this Gift that grants them the emotional stoicism of a rock.

System: The player spends one Gnosis; the difficulty to enter frenzy is raised by 3, and the character may add two dice any roll to escape frenzy. This Gift's effects last until the next sundown.

MET: *Basic* Gift. By spending a moment in calm meditation, preferably in contact with bare earth or stone, the Garou may spend a Gnosis Trait to channel the stoicism of the cold stone. Until the next sunrise, the Garou is three Traits up to resist frenzy regardless of the source, and furthermore she (or any other character attempting to do the same) receives a free retest on any attempts to calm her down or otherwise end her frenzy. However, while this Gift is in effect, the Garou receives the Negative Trait: *Callous*.

Blood Red Crest

• **Merlin's Call (Level Two)** — This Gift allows the alpha of a pack to call out to her fellows, letting them know exactly where she is and allowing them to rally around her, even in complete darkness or other situations in which the werewolves are effectively blinded like heavy fog, or intervening walls. However, the sound that the alpha makes cannot be used by other creatures to locate the Garou. A merlin-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis and rolls Charisma + Expression (difficulty 7). Any other member of the character's pack knows exactly where she is, relative to his own position, for a number of turns equal to the successes rolled; any creature within earshot who is not a member of the pack hears nothing.

MET: *Basic* Gift. By spending a Social Trait, the Garou may declare "<Pack Name>! Merlin's Call!" as loudly as gameplay permits; any pack members within hearing distance are immediately aware of where the alpha is and how far away they are relative to him, regardless of blindness, in-game walls or other barriers and the like. Use of this Gift does not count as an action. Non-pack members do not hear the call, including other Garou or beings with supernatural hearing, and thus they cannot track the Garou based on this noise. If the Garou spends a Gnosis Trait in addition to the basic cost of this Gift, not only may he extend this Gift's benefits to pack members outside of hearing range (possibly requiring a Narrator to alert them), but pack members are considered one Trait up on all challenges for the remainder of the turn. (To speed play, the player should discuss this Gift with her pack beforehand, and indicate use of the enhanced version of this Gift by adding "Inspired!" or something similar to the end of the call.) Garou who are not pack alpha may not use this Gift.

• **Burning Blade (Level Three)** — This Gift causes a Garou's weapon, be it a sword, klaive or axe, to burn with a deadly fire that burns her enemy even as it bites into their flesh. A firebird spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Gnosis (difficulty 7) to activate the Gift. The weapon now does two extra dice of fire damage (which is to say, aggravated). Flammable objects will catch fire if struck by the blade. The fire burns for a number of turns equal to the number of successes rolled.

MET: *Intermediate* Gift. By spending a Gnosis Trait, the Garou may cause a melee weapon he is wielding to burst into flame, inflicting an additional level of aggravated damage on a successful strike and forcing targets to win or tie a Simple Test to avoid catching fire after being struck. This flame will also light any flammable objects, though it does not harm the Garou herself, nor does it damage the weapon in any way. This Gift lasts for a number of turns equal to the Garou's Gnosis rating, though it may be re-activated at the end of this time with another Gnosis expenditure. Only melee weapons can be affected by this Gift — bows and firearms are ineligible to receive this Gift, as are thrown weapons or claws, and throwing the weapon in question causes it to extinguish immediately at the end of the turn.

Crescent Moon

• **Wind of Buzzard's Wings (Level One)** — As the Wendigo Gift: Call the Breeze.

• **Leshii's Boon (Level Four)** — This Gift allows the Fang to turn the very plants and trees of the forest against her enemies. Tree branches lash against them and roots trip them up, animals nip at their heels and insects swarm around them. A leshii spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis point and rolls Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 6). Every enemy of the werewolf within a radius of the number of successes scored in meters loses two dice from every non-reflexive roll for the duration of the scene. In addition, should they be foolish enough to try to eat anything they find in the forest, it will do the number of success rolled levels of lethal damage.

MET: *Intermediate* Gift. With the expenditure of a Gnosis Trait and a Mental test against a difficulty based on the wildness of the surroundings (retest *Occult*), the

Garou may cause nearby plants and woodland animals to lash out at targets of her choosing. Foes thus afflicted are at a one-Trait penalty on all tests for the rest of the scene due to the constant distraction; however, the forest seldom inflicts true harm unless the target is so foolish as to try to eat anything they find, inflict grievous or gratuitous injury on a forest creature or otherwise insult the spirits of the forest. Each time they wish to indulge in such behavior, these unfortunate souls must immediately make a Willpower test against the Garou's Gnosis Traits; failure means that they immediately suffer a level of lethal damage, inflicted somehow by the forest and its inhabitants.

Unbreakable Hearth

• **Harrier's View (Level One)** — The Gift allows a pack alpha to have a prefect sense of where his packmates are, relative to his own position. This allows him to howl or shout orders more effectively and plan the tactics of the group better. A harrier-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends one Gnosis to activate the Gift. For the remainder of the scene he has an uncanny sense of his packmates' location. All Leadership rolls involving packmates are at -2 difficulty and all participants in any pack tactic gain an extra die on their roll(s) to complete the tactic.

MET: *Basic* Gift. With the expenditure of a Mental Trait, the Garou immediately knows where all of his packmates are, relative to himself, and is two Traits up on all *Leadership* tests with his packmates for the rest of the scene. In addition, pack members are considered one Trait up on any tests related to pack tactics or other *specific* plans the pack worked out in advance, due to their strengthened bond.

• **Hidden Meaning (Level Two)** — Sometimes what someone doesn't say is just as revealing as what they do say. This Gift allows a listener a sense of exactly what a speaker is concealing or avoiding saying. A heron-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player rolls Perception + Empathy. If the roll succeeds, the character gains an idea of what worries the speaker most, even if they haven't alluded to it in anyway during the speech. The

more successes achieved, the more information the Storyteller should provide.

MET: *Basic* Gift. To use this Gift, the Garou must first listen to the target talking about a particular topic for at least a minute. She may then make a Mental test (retest *Empathy*); if successful, she may immediately ask her target "What worries you most?" about the subject of the target's speech. A Narrator may be employed to ask this question and relay the requisite information if the Gift user desires.

Wise Heart

• **Locate Spirit Tutor (Level Two)** — The werewolves of House Wise Heart are renowned for their skill as tutors and mentors. However, they know that the spirits themselves are the best tutors for Gifts. This Gift allows a Silver Fang in the Umbra to locate the nearest spirit that can teach a particular Gift that he wishes his student to learn. From that point onwards, it is all up to the student and the spirit. A peregrine falcon-spirit teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a Willpower point and rolls Charisma + Leadership (difficulty 7). The more successes scored the better sense the character has of where an appropriate spirit resides.

MET: *Basic* Gift. To use this Gift, the Garou must first cross into the Umbra; it never functions in the material world. Once they have crossed, the Garou must spend a moment meditating and beseeching guidance, then spend a Willpower Trait and make a Social test against a difficulty of five Traits. If successful, the Garou immediately gains a sense of where the nearest spirit is that can teach the Gift he has in mind, though it is up to the Garou to actually befriend the spirit; all this Gift does is locate a suitable teacher.

• **Deep Roots (Level Two)** — This Gift allows the steadfast members of House Wise Heart to stand their ground against their foes. Nothing can move a werewolf rooted with this Gift, although he is as vulnerable to other forms of attack as ever. Any forest-dwelling spirit can teach this Gift.

System: The player rolls Gnosis (difficulty 7). The character becomes rooted to that spot for a number of turns equal to the number of successes on the roll. Any attempt to push, pull, drag or lift the Garou automatically fails to move the character, although it can still do damage.

MET: *Basic* Gift. With the expenditure of a Physical Trait or level of the *Survival* Ability, the Garou may become immovable for a number of turns equal to their permanent Gnosis rating — all attempts to move her automatically fail, though she still suffers damage normally, and if she is rendered Incapacitated or killed this Gift ends. Note that the Garou may still choose to move during this time if she wishes; she is simply immune to being moved by others.

Wyrmfoe

• **Eagle's Beak (Level Two)** — The eagle's beak is a sharp, tearing weapon that can tear its prey apart in seconds. An eagle spirit can teach a Silver Fang the secret of eviscerating his enemy swiftly through this Gift.

System: The player spends a Rage point and spends a turn screeching his defiance at his enemy. For the remainder of the scene all bite attacks do two extra dice of damage.

MET: *Basic* Gift. To activate this Gift, the Garou must spend a Rage Trait and an entire turn screeching at his foes in defiance, though he may still defend himself normally in that time. Following that, for the rest of the scene all bite attacks inflict an extra level of damage of the appropriate type.

• **Hand Blade (Level Two)** — Many Silver Fangs specialize in klaive dueling and swordplay. On occasions, they are disarmed or attacked when they are unarmed. This Gift allows them to rely on their skill in swordplay by turning their arm into a razor-sharp blade that slices and cuts like the best-forged sword. An ancestor spirit, usually a former klaive dueling master, teaches this Gift.

System: The player spends a point of Rage and rolls Gnosis to transform his hand. For the rest of the scene, he may use his arm like a sword, by rolling Dexterity + Melee (difficulty 6), doing Strength + 2 aggravated damage, as his claws are part of the blade. However, each parry or other blade-to-blade maneuver the werewolf attempts costs him one level of lethal damage. More than three unregenerated levels of damage inflicted this way render the arm useless.

MET: *Basic* Gift. With the expenditure of a Rage Trait, the Garou's arm transforms into a bladelike shape, allowing him to wield his arm like a sword for the rest of the scene, including using *Melee* for all relevant retests. In all other ways, the Garou's arm is treated as a sword (use the statistics for a klaive if in doubt), including dealing aggravated damage as the Garou's claws are part of the weapon. Every time they attempt a parry or similar blade-to-blade maneuver, however, the Garou automatically suffers a level of lethal damage, even if the attempt is successful, and more than three such levels of damage render the arm useless until it has time to regenerate.

Lodge Gifts

It is not easy to gain Gifts from the two Silver Fang lodges. It requires commitment and study before spirits will consent to teach such a Gift to a werewolf, and even then they may put the supplicant through a number of tests before they will even consider giving up their wisdom.

Sun Lodge

Sun Lodge Gifts are jealously protected secrets and are not taught to any werewolf unless he has proven himself loyal and committed to the lodge's ethos. This isn't a matter of embarking on a quest to prove worthiness or swearing great oaths of loyalty, but instead of integrating the virtues that the lodge honors into the character's life. In essence, it is very hard to prove yourself worthy unless you already possess the virtues needed for worthiness. This includes a measure of tact and diplomacy, an ability to lead fairly without favoritism and a demonstrated tendency to balance instinct with rational thought. The character has to display these attributes over a period stretching for months or years before the spirits will accept a petitioner as genuine. A very few werewolves have been able to prove themselves worthy of both Sun and Moon Lodge Gifts, but they are amongst the legendary heroes of the tribes.

• **Truce of Helios (Level Two)** — Helios brings reason and tact to the werewolves who honor him. He teaches the Garou to temper their instinct and Rage with thought and logic. Thus, those who follow him often become skilled diplomats and negotiators. Often the biggest problem in achieving a truce, treaty or alliance is getting the other side to listen to the argument that the character is putting forward. This Gift forces them to listen to what the Silver Fang has to say. However, Helios values truth and justice. He does not force the listener to accept what is said. Neither does he allow his followers to use this Gift to gain a combat advantage over another by using it to delay the listener while an ambush or attack is organized. Any werewolf using the Gift in that way will find that it doesn't work, and may find it never working for them again. Helios sends a Child of Karnak or a Firebird spirit to teach this Gift to those he finds worthy.

System: To enforce a truce, the player spends a point of Gnosis and rolls Charisma + Etiquette (difficulty 7). If the roll succeeds, the negotiation proceeds under the force of a spiritually imposed peace. All those involved in the debate must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 9, minimum of two successes needed) to attack the speaker, ignore him or otherwise disrupt the proceedings. The truce endures for one hour per success rolled. However, should the Silver Fang calling upon this Gift break the truce, its effects immediately end and will never be effective against the same target again. Doing this is a terrible insult to Helios and results in the loss of three points of temporary Honor and may lead to the character's expulsion from the Sun Lodge.

MET: *Basic* Gift. In order to activate this Gift, the Garou must openly propose a truce that the other side(s) in a dispute agrees to accept; if this condition is met, the Garou may spent a Gnosis Trait to spiritually enforce the conditions of the peace for all present. During the following negotiations, those who seek to attack the speakers, outright ignore them or otherwise disrupt the proceedings must first defeat the Garou in a test of their Willpower versus the Garou's Social Traits. Even if they are successful, they may still suffer loss of Honor Renown unless pressing reason exists for them to have violated a truce agreed upon in good faith in this manner; should the Garou using this Gift violate the peace himself, he suffers an immediate loss of Honor Renown regardless of the circumstances, and may even be expelled from the Sun Lodge unless the situation was truly dire. In addition, this Gift is never again effective against those who were present for the Garou's violation of this sacred trust. This Gift lasts for the duration of one day or one negotiation, whichever comes first, although it should be noted that while those present are forbidden from attacking each other as part of the truce, they are still able to defend themselves from sudden attacks or other outside threats that may fall on them while this Gift is effective, without loss of Honor.

• **Honor Pact (Level Three)** — This is another of Helios' Gifts that allows diplomacy between even the most intransigent of opponents. For the Gift to work, though, all parties involved in the negotiation must agree to its use willingly, even if they consider their position fixed and room for debate to be minimal. Participants must show their willingness by spilling their own blood and mingling it with that of the other participants, usually by slicing open their palms and shaking hands. Helios does not consider those creatures without blood or with toxic or damaging blood worthy of his Gift and they cannot participate. Each participant then swears an oath to both Falcon and Helios to work with her fellow participants to find a solution. This forges spiritual bonds between all involved, preventing them from acting against one another's interests and hopefully allowing a conclusion to the negotiations that suits and benefits all.

On occasions, a pack with a Sun Lodge member will use this Gift to prevent minions of the Defiler Wyrm turning one packmate against another. Helios allows a Child of Karnak to teach this Gift.

Where Are the Level One Sun Lodge Gifts?

The Sun Lodge doesn't teach Level One Gifts, simply because a werewolf of that lowly rank has not yet reached the sophistication and understanding necessary to truly understand what the lodges are about. While first rank characters can be members of one of the lodges, they do not gain true understanding of the concepts involved for some time. Level One Gifts are too simple and straightforward to really reflect the philosophies of the Sun Lodge. While some of the tribal Level One Gifts are more associated with the Sun Lodge — Reason's Grasp, for example — they are not truly Lodge Gifts, because any werewolf can grasp the concepts involved.

System: Each participant must spend three Gnosis, while the player of the user of the Gift spends four Gnosis. All players (and the Storyteller, if a Storyteller character is participating) make a Charisma + Rituals roll (difficulty 7). If the rolls succeed, all Social rolls between the group are at -2 difficulty. The players should also roleplay the lack of antagonism and care for each other's interests with the guidance of the Storyteller, who has the final say on what this entails.

The effects of the Gift are permanent, unless one of the participants breaks faith. Servants of Falcon and Helios immediately set upon the character that does so, burning and tearing at her for five health levels of aggravated damage. If the character survives, she is marked as an oath breaker, as per the Stone of Scorn rite (**Werewolf**, p. 162). Repeated arguments or petty fights between the participants will erode the Gift's effects over time, at the Storyteller's discretion. The only way to strengthen an eroded Pact is to perform the whole process again.

Any servant of the Defiler Wyrm who tries to corrupt or turn those under the Honor Pact is at +3 difficulty to any roll related to the action.

MET: *Intermediate* Gift. To enact this potent Gift, the Garou and the others she wishes to form a bond with must all agree to this Gift's use (even if they see little chance of changing their minds), and spend three Gnosis Traits together while performing a suitable bonding ritual of some kind, which must take at least five minutes to perform. Once these conditions are met, the participants are considered two Traits up on all friendly Social tests with each other and in general should roleplay their reduced antagonism and increased willingness to devise amenable solutions to their common problems. While they need not immediately all group hug, this Gift goes a long way toward helping even the most intractable foes see the wisdom of working out their differences together. Should a character outright break this pact, they immediately suffer five levels of aggravated damage and are marked as an oath breaker; however, petty fights and other repeated minor slights will eventually wear down the bond without causing such a radical punishment. Bonds that have been eroded (Storyteller's discretion) may only be re-invigorated with a new use of this Gift. Servants of the Wyrm who attempt to corrupt or turn those under the influence of this Gift against their bonded companions suffer a three Trait penalty to all related actions.

Moon Lodge

While the Sun Lodge Gifts demand that a werewolf bring rationality and self-control into his life, the Gifts of the Moon Lodge demand that he acknowledge his nature as a child of Luna. As Luna waxes and wanes, so too does her personality and the power of her Gifts. A werewolf of the Moon Lodge must learn his place in the cycle, know when he is strongest and most in Luna's favor, according to his auspice, and when he must let others shine as Luna turns to favor them.

Moon Lodge Gifts always come in waxing or waning cycles of five Gifts, each one tied to a particular auspice. Waxing cycles run from Ragabash at Level One through Theurge at Level Two, Philodox at Level Three, Galliard at Level Four and Ahroun at Level Five. Waning cycles run in reverse. With each new Gift in the cycle, the Garou learns more about the different faces of Luna. The werewolf learning the cycle will gain particular benefit from the Gift that matches their auspice. A Silver Fang of the Moon Lodge must learn one complete cycle before starting another. Thus, only the mightiest of Garou know more than one cycle of Moon Lodge Gifts.

Waxing Cycle — The External Moon

• **New Moon's Laughter (Level One)** — This Gift allows a werewolf to make others around her more receptive to criticism and less obsessed with their own pride, thus showing them the wisdom of the New Moon. To learn this Gift, the werewolf must trick a Lune into revealing the Gift.

System: The player must spend a point of Gnosis and roll Gnosis (difficulty 6). For one hour per success scored, the gathering that the character attended takes on a lighter mood. All Social rolls with a positive intent are at -1 difficulty, while all Social rolls intended to provoke argument, insult or misery are at +1 difficulty. If the character using the Gift is a Ragabash, the bonus and penalty are doubled.

MET: *Basic* Gift. By spending a Gnosis Trait and making some comment or joke about learning to accept criticism or embrace humility, the Garou may make it less likely others will take offense at the words of others. For the duration of one scene, all positive Social tests are one Trait up, while all negative or hurtful Social tests are one Trait down; if the Garou using this Gift is a Ragabash, these modifiers are doubled.

• **Crescent Moon's Awareness (Level Two)** — This Gift allows the character to make others around her more aware of the spirits of the place. Garou catch glimpses and hear incomprehensible whispers of the spirits in the Penumbra, while Kinfolk and other humans feel an unsettling awareness of an alien world that they are normally oblivious to and have no means of understanding. This teaches them the power of the Crescent Moon. To learn this Gift, the Fang must track down any one of Falcon's brood and perform one, simple service for him.

System: The player spends a point of Gnosis and rolls Gnosis (difficulty 7). If the roll succeeds, all creatures in her immediate area (20 yards or so) become aware of the Penumbra at the edge of their senses. Garou may then step sideways or communicate with spirits at -1 difficulty. Humans, Kinfolk and animals find the effect profoundly disconcerting and lose one die from all their rolls while the Gift is in effect. Crescent Moon Awareness lasts for one turn per success rolled. The effects are doubled when a Theurge uses this Gift.

MET: *Basic* Gift. By spending a Gnosis Trait and engaging all those in the area in a test of her Gnosis rating against their Willpower, the Garou may cause those affected to become more intimately aware of the spirit world, for better or worse. Garou and other changers find this connection invigorating, and are considered one Trait up on all attempts to step sideways or communicate with spirits. Kinfolk, animals, ordinary humans and most other supernatural beings find this perception highly disturbing instead, and are considered on Trait down on all tests. This Gift lasts for a number of turns or minutes equal to the Garou's permanent Gnosis rating, though if the Garou using the Gift is a Theurge, both duration and effect are doubled.

• **Half Moon's Diplomacy (Level Three)** — Sometimes the first step to resolving a dispute is to prevent yourself saying anything to make the situation worse. This Gift allows a werewolf to try to calm an explosive moment by preventing everyone present from saying anything inflammatory, thus bringing them all the Half Moon's wisdom. To learn this Gift, the werewolf must follow a harrier-spirit for an hour, matching her flight path from the ground, until she tires and consents to share this Gift.

System: The player spends a point of Gnosis and rolls Manipulation + Empathy (difficulty 7). If the roll succeeds, anyone involved in the debate must concentrate for a turn by staying silent and then roll Willpower (difficulty 8) to say anything that they know is likely to make things worse. The effect lasts for one minute per success rolled. If a Philodox uses this Gift, then the initial roll is at difficulty 6 and the participants in the debate must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 9) to inflame the argument.

MET: *Intermediate* Gift. To use this Gift, the Garou must spend a Gnosis Trait and make a Mental test against a difficulty of seven (retest *Law*). If successful, anyone involved in the current debate or discussion must first be silent for five seconds and then make a Willpower test against a difficulty of five Traits in order to say anything they know is likely to make things worse. The Narrator has final say on what constitutes something likely to make things worse, although as a rule of thumb if the *player* — not the character — knows that their comment will likely erode the current situation without any real gain, then this Gift applies. (Players who repeatedly "overlook" the obviously inflammatory nature of their comments should be punished accordingly; it's one thing to make an honest mistake, but quite another to repeatedly circumvent this Gift by feigning ignorance or claiming "my character is a jerk.") If a Philodox uses this Gift, the difficulty of the initial Mental test is lowered by two, while the difficulty of the Willpower test is increased by two, and the Garou may spend a Mental Trait to force someone to retest a successful Willpower test to say something hurtful. Only one retest may be forced this way per statement. This Gift lasts for the length of one debate.

• **Gibbous Moon's Understanding (Level Four)** — The greatest of the Silver Fangs' Galliards have sometimes also been some of the tribe's most successful battlefield leaders. This Gift can take some of the credit for this. It allows the werewolf to howl out general or specific instructions to her allies, and have them heard and understood even over the noise of battle, thus showing everyone the Gibbous Moon's wisdom. To learn this Gift, the werewolf must persuade three different Lunes to spend a whole night in the character's company. Just before dawn, one of them will teach the Gift.

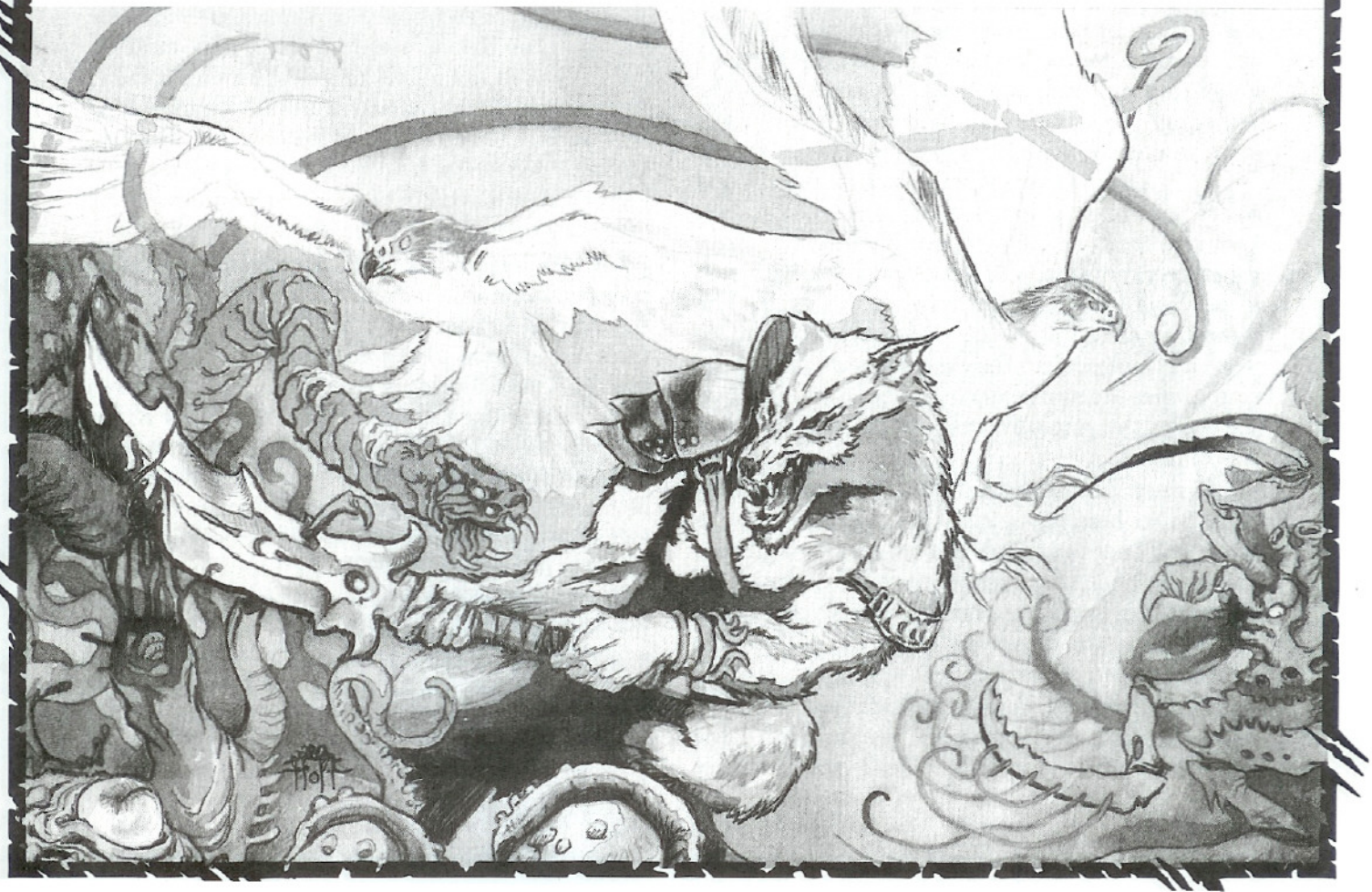
System: The player spends a point of Rage and rolls Charisma + Leadership (difficulty 7). The number of successes is the number of howls the werewolf can make during this scene that will be understood as an order by any ally fighting in the same battle as the character. A Galliard character makes the roll at difficulty 5.

MET: *Intermediate* Gift. Use of this Gift requires the expenditure of a Rage Trait and a Social Trait, and lasts for the duration of one battle or one hour, whichever comes first. During this time, the Garou may howl out specific instructions to her allies and be heard clearly, even by deafened comrades or over the din of a terrible battle. Use of this Gift does not require an action, though considerate players should carry cell phones, walkie-talkies or some other means of communicating to avoid running Narrators ragged if they are communicating over particularly long distances. Note that this Gift does not allow the Garou to be heard at a longer range than she could normally howl, merely ignore any noise or other obstructions within that range, and does not allow two-way communication, only the relaying of instructions from the Garou to her fellows. Should a Galliard use this Gift, the Rage Trait cost is waived.

• **Full Moon's Wrath (Level Five)** — Sometimes Luna's wrath waxes so great that her enemies fall before her chosen like corn before a scythe. This Gift allows a hard-pressed werewolf to summon war-spirits to her aid, striking at her enemies and giving her respite. Their power teaches the werewolf and her allies, not to mention her enemies, the wisdom and strength of the Full Moon. The werewolf must find and defeat nine of Falcon's brood of Jagglings in succession on a night of the full moon to learn this Gift. At the end of the night, an Avatar of Luna appears and binds the defeated spirits to the Fang's service ever more. However, she demands that the Garou be at her disposal on nights of the full moon in exchange.

System: To activate the Gift the player spends a point of Rage and Gnosis and then rolls Gnosis (difficulty 7, 5 for Ahroun). One of the defeated bird-spirits appears and attacks the enemies of the werewolf for each success rolled. The spirits remain part of the fray until they are defeated, the werewolf dies or the battle ends, at which point they depart into the Umbra once more.

MET: *Advanced* Gift. With the expenditure of a Rage Trait and a Gnosis Trait, the Garou may make a number of Simple Tests equal to her Gnosis rating (*Leadership* retest); for each successful test, a Jaggling spirit of Falcon appears and attacks one of the character's enemies until it is defeated, the werewolf dies or the battle ends. Should an Ahroun use this Gift, a Jaggling is summoned on a win or a tie of any of the Simple Tests. Needless to say, the Spirit Keeper should be alerted to this Gift's use, and it is a good idea to have cards with the statistics of these spirits ready for when this Gift is used. Note that the Garou must be in dire need for this Gift to work, which usually translates to fighting against overwhelming odds, obviously superior opponents and/or when sorely wounded; attempting to use this Gift for lesser circumstances will fail



automatically, and may even incur a Renown penalty for the arrogant Garou. The Narrator has final say on when this Gift's use is warranted.

Waning Cycle — The Internal Moon

• **Full Moon Cleansing (Level One)** — This Gift allows a Garou to turn her own Rage against her Harano, thereby defeating it like any other enemy. The werewolf learns this Gift in ritual combat with a blood-warrior spirit, who must be defeated and burnt in an Umbral fire. The Garou then marks himself with the glyph for her own auspice and the Ahroun glyph. Thus, she learns how the anger of the Full Moon may be made part of herself.

System: The player must spend one point of Rage and make a Rage roll (difficulty 7, difficulty 6 for Ahroun) to activate the Gift. The character may then ignore the effects of Harano for one scene per success rolled.

MET: *Basic* Gift. By spending a Rage Trait and making a Rage test against a difficulty equal to the number of scenes spent in her most recent bout of Harano (maximum eleven), the Garou may ignore Harano for a number of scenes or hours, whichever is longer, equal to her permanent Rage rating. If the Garou employing this Gift is an Ahroun, she wins all ties on this test, regardless of whether or not her Rage rating exceeds the difficulty number assigned.

• **Gibbous Moon Song (Level Two)** — The Gift allows a Garou to learn the benefits of a smooth tongue and social awareness. It makes the werewolf talkative, interesting and likable, the very life and soul of any gathering. The moon's own light seems to make her more interesting and attractive than she normally seems. A Great Green Cheese spirit, a lively and somewhat aromatic member of Luna's brood, best known to the Bone Gnawers, teaches this Gift. Arrogant Silver Fangs who will not deign to deal with such a spirit will struggle to progress on this cycle. The werewolf and the spirit engage in a battle of wits, to see who can come up with the cleverest word play. If the Garou wins, the spirit happily teaches the Gift. Thus, she makes the persuasiveness of the Gibbous Moon part of herself.

System: The player rolls Wits + Enigmas (difficulty 8) to best the spirit. This roll may only be attempted once per month and only during a gibbous moon. Once the character knows the Gift, the player activates it by spending a point of Gnosis. All Social rolls gain an extra die for the remainder of the scene (three dice for Galliards).

MET: *Basic* Gift. To learn this Gift, the Garou must locate a suitable spirit teacher and best them in a battle of wits and wordplay — while ideally this exchange should be roleplayed out as much as possible, either the player or the Narrator may choose to make it a straightforward Mental test (retest *Enigmas*) between the two parties to determine the outcome. Furthermore, a Garou may only attempt to learn this Gift once per lunar cycle, and only during the gibbous phase of the moon. Once it has been learned, activation requires only the expenditure of a Gnosis Trait, and lasts until the end of the scene — during that time, the Garou gains the Social Traits *Friendly* and *Eloquent*, and receives a free retest on all positive Social tests.

• **Half Moon Mnemonics (Level Three)** — This Gift allows a Garou to remember a moment with perfect clarity, fixing it forever within their mind. They may recall that moment at any time, and examine the memory from any angle they wish. The memory does not dim with age, and the recall is always perfect and total. A sea spirit teaches this Gift. The werewolf must seek an Umbral sea and mediate on the sound of its waves, until she can hear the sea spirit calling to her. She must then focus on those instructions while at the same time keeping total awareness of the moment to learn this Gift. Thus, she makes the wisdom and reflection of the Half Moon part of herself.

System: The player must spend one point of Gnosis to store a memory and then rolls Wits & Alertness (difficulty 6) to fix it in the characters mind. The roll is at difficulty 5 for a Philodox. The character can store one memory for every point of permanent Gnosis she has. To recall the memory, the player must make an Intelligence + Occult roll (difficult 7, 6 if the character is a Philodox, 5 if the character is a Philodox and staring into water). A botch means the memory vanishes, leaving a permanent hole in the character's memory. The character may dump memories at any time, leaving her only a normal, fallible recollection of the event.

MET: *Intermediate* Gift. Once learned, a Garou may spend a Gnosis Trait and make a Mental test (retest *Alertness*) to fix a memory in her mind, a process which takes one full turn to perform during stressful circumstances. The difficulty of this test is normally seven Traits, though for a Philodox using this Gift it is only four. Once stored, the memory remains perfect, and can be viewed and replayed from any angle the Garou desires with only a moment's concentration. A Garou may store as many memories as her permanent Gnosis rating in this fashion, however she may also choose to "dump" unwanted memories at any time, returning them to normal, fallible recollection. Due to the intense detail that is recalled, it is advisable to either bring suitable recording equipment as an out-of-game representation of the Garou's perfect memory — video camera, microcassette recorder, etc. — or have a

Narrator on hand to help take down what will be remembered so there is no doubt later on as to what occurred. The maximum length of a memory that can be stored is up to the Narrator's discretion; while a romantic interlude might be possible, for example, an extended siege would not be, and Narrators should feel free to allow only memories of relatively short duration (say a minute or so) in order to avoid confusion later on.

• **Crescent Moon Fata (Level Four)** — This Gift allows a Garou to perceive the very threads of fate and destiny that direct the world. By studying a person or object, she can learn a little about its past, or its possible future. To learn this Gift, the werewolf must find a spider or firefly Jaggling of Moira, one of Luna's Incarna, and challenge it to a contest of gamecraft. Should the Garou win, the Jaggling opens her eye to the play of fate upon the world. Thus, she makes the spiritual awareness of the Crescent Moon part of herself.

System: To win the gamecraft contest, the player rolls Wits + Enigmas (difficulty 9, 7 if the character is a Theurge). Should the roll be botched, the Jaggling takes umbrage at the character's clumsy mind and takes three temporary Gnosis from the character as payment for its wasted time.

To activate the Gift, the player makes a Perception + Empathy roll (difficulty 5, 4 if the character is a Theurge). The character sees one thread of fate per success. The player may choose to spend multiple threads on one target, or to spread them amongst several. Each thread allows a single glimpse into the future or past. Multiple threads allocated in the same direction on the same target will allow the character to see further into the past or future. The Storyteller determines exactly what she sees, but should be both inventive and somewhat cryptic in the description. The workings of fate are strange and not easily understood by even the most aware of Theurges. However, it is much easier to see the past than the future. As a rule of thumb, each success will add hours into the past or minutes into the future.

MET: *Intermediate* Gift. To learn this Gift, the Garou must defeat a suitable spirit in a contest of gamecraft — once again, this should be roleplayed out as much as possible, though if need be it can made into a Mental test (retest *Enigmas*) to determine the winner. Theurges win all ties on this test, regardless of who has more Traits. Should the Garou fail, they immediately lose three Gnosis Traits and must wait a month to attempt to learn this Gift again. Once learned, the Garou may attempt to glimpse the future or the past by spending at least ten minutes in uninterrupted meditation — usually a good time to send for a Storyteller — and then making a number of Mental tests (retest *Empathy*) equal to the character's permanent levels of the *Empathy* Ability, against a difficulty of nine Traits (seven for a Theurge). For each successful test, the Garou may view one "thread" or brief glimpse into the past or future of a particular subject — in the case of multiple successes she may choose to spread these threads around to learn about several different subjects, or she may choose to focus on one individual, as she desires. Each thread grants one minute of viewing into the future or one hour in the past. The Storyteller should feel free to be as cryptic and creative as he likes in presenting these visions, though as a rule the past is much more straightforward than the future.

• **New Moon Legerdemain (Level Five)** — This Gift allows the werewolf to summon and command a group of small trickster spirits. This last step in the Cycle brings the werewolf to an understanding of Luna's need for the tricksters and the madness that she welcomes. The spirits, once summoned, dance around the Garou in the Penumbra, protecting her from harm but disturbing and unsettling all those around her. They play tricks on everyone in the vicinity; harmless and amusing ones on the werewolf's allies and destructive ones on her enemies. An avatar of Luna herself teaches this Gift, which puts the Garou in her debt — and service — forever. To learn the Gift, the Garou must undertake a great quest in Luna's name, one that may take several game sessions to play out. Once the werewolf succeeds, Luna gifts her loyal subject an understanding of the true nature of madness. Thus, the werewolf makes the New Moon's twisted wisdom part of herself.

System: The Gift costs a point of permanent Gnosis to learn. Once the spirits are summoned, strangelings, chimera and Wyldlings usually, they never leave their werewolf. At times, they may rest quietly, semi dormant in the Penumbra near the Garou, although they may occasionally play tricks on her or those around her. They are always dormant during the day. They awaken into full life during the New Moon or at the call of the Garou. To awaken the spirits, the player rolls Gnosis (difficulty 6, 5 if the character is a Ragabash) and spends a point of Gnosis. The pack of spirits becomes active for one night per success. If the werewolf wishes them to go back to sleep, the player must roll Gnosis as above, spending another point of Gnosis and get at least two successes.

Once they are active, the spirits play games and vicious tricks on all the werewolf's enemies within a 25-foot radius, pinching, tripping and interfering with them in all manner of ways. This creates a +2 difficulty to all the enemies' rolls and removes two dice from their dice pools to boot. The spirits may steal an object from an enemy in the Umbra once per day. It will only

be a minor item of little worth or power, as defined by the Storyteller. The spirits might show their werewolf their prize, or they may not, depending on their whims. If no enemies are at hand, the spirits may turn their attentions to whomever is at hand (save the Gift's master) — even allies are not quite safe, although the spirits harass them somewhat more infrequently. It is the wise Garou who sings the spirits back to slumber when the battle is done.

A powerful spirit, of Jaggling level or higher, may disperse the spirits for a scene by spending a point of Gnosis.

MET: *Advanced* Gift. After completing a suitably arduous quest in Luna's name and sacrificing a permanent Gnosis Trait, the Garou has a number of minor Wyld spirits permanently bound to her — even if destroyed, they will eventually reform at the character's side again. These spirits are normally dormant, although they awaken during the New Moon or when the Garou calls; calling requires the expenditure of a Gnosis Trait and a Gnosis test against five Traits. Ragabash receive a free retest on all attempts to awaken these spirits. Once active, the spirits remain awake for a number of scenes equal to the Garou's permanent Gnosis rating, constantly harassing the Garou's enemies or playing tricks on her allies. This manifests as a one-Trait penalty on all actions taken by the Garou's enemies in the immediate area, and a two-Trait penalty on all actions taken against the Garou directly. The Spirit Keeper should be summoned to monitor the use of this Gift, keep track of the Garou's enemies and otherwise adjudicate the actions of these capricious spirits as necessary. If no enemies are present, the spirits will instead play harmless pranks on the Garou's allies, which though irritating will never cause lasting harm or loss of property. The Garou may attempt to sing these spirits back to sleep at any time; this requires a Gnosis Trait, a turn spent singing a soft lullaby and a Gnosis test of the same sort as it takes to awaken the spirits. Once again, Ragabash receive a free retest on this challenge. In addition, spirits of Jaggling level or higher may disperse these spirits for a scene by spending a Gnosis Trait and creating a suitably intimidating display.

Rites

Rites of Accord

Rite of the Honorable Oath

Level One

The Silver Fangs take their oaths of service very seriously indeed. When anyone wishes to swear service to a Silver Fang Lord who follows the old traditions of the tribe, the Lord may ask them to undergo this rite, but will never press the point. Many Silver Fangs voluntarily undergo it if offering service to another werewolf, but are offended if others demand it of them. To swear the oath, the character swears to undertake a single task, which is outlined by the recipient of the oath and repeated by the character undergoing it. The character offering service then gives a small object of value to himself to the recipient of the oath.

Should the oath taker stay true to their word, he will receive Renown whether or not the mission is successful. The recipient of the oath should return the gifted item at the conclusion of the service.

System: The player of the oath giver spends one Gnosis to activate the rite. If the character keeps her word and attempts the mission to the best of her abilities, she gains four points of Honor, irrespective of the quest's outcome — if she does not do so, she loses four points of Honor. The recipient of the oath is under no compulsion to return the object gifted to them, but may lose two points of Honor if she does not do so.

Rite of the Loyal Pack

Level Three

The Silver Fangs do, despite claims to the contrary, understand that leadership is a two-way street. A leader needs respect from those that follow him if he (and they) wish to succeed. Usually, only packs that have been working together for some time and who trust each other enough to further cement those bonds perform this rite.

The rite makes the whole pack's focus and commitment dependent on the pack alpha. In effect, they submit completely to him, in the hope of gaining an advantage from it if he is committed to working for the benefit of all. Each member of the pack must take a small item of personal significance and a length of his or her own hair and give it to the ritemaster. She then binds together all the objects using the hairs and buries the bundle within the pack's home caern.

System: The player of the werewolf enacting the Rite rolls Charisma + Rituals (difficulty 9 - the pack alpha's Leadership). If the roll succeeds, the entire pack gains two extra points of Willpower per chapter as long as the pack alpha is acting in the best interests of the whole pack. However, if the alpha has not been doing so, the entire pack loses two points of Willpower for the chapter. The gain or loss is entirely at the Storyteller's discretion. Should the pack alpha change, the rite's effects immediately end.

Rite of Kingship

Level Four

This rite, as described in Chapter Two (p. 51), is used to crown the true kings of the tribe. The rite is rarely used for obvious reasons, but the shamans of the Silver Fangs traditionally teach it to multiple

promising students, so that it will never be lost through a shaman's untimely death. To be taught the Rite of Kingship is a distinct honor, and many Theurges vie to be recognized as worthy of the rite.

System: Standard roll. Success indicates that the recipient has been properly marked as a Silver Fang king, and that all spirits that owe allegiance to Gaia, Luna or Helios will automatically recognize him as such (as may some Banes). As noted, certain omens may overturn this result, depending on circumstances.

Mystic Rites

Rite of Breeding

Level One

The rite is one of the secrets behind the Silver Fang's unusually high levels of Pure Breed. When a Fang feels that it is time for her to start a family, she enacts this rite and asks her house's totem to guide her to her best-matched mate. The werewolf meditates on her ancestry, using pictures, stories, photos or keepsakes and then calls to the totem for guidance. If the rite is successful, the totem grants her a vision of herself carried aloft in the talons of the totem to the home of the best prospect for a strong, worthy child. The rite does not guarantee that the prospective mate will welcome the werewolf's advances; just that he is a good genetic and spiritual match.

System: Standard roll. This rite normally takes place within the boundaries of the home caern, and shows the Kinfolk most likely to prove a good mate within a few days' travel. The more successes achieved the more details the vision gives about the prospective mate and his location. This ritual does not help with seducing or winning the heart of the Kinfolk in any way.

Walking With the Dead

Level Three

Only the members of the secretive Ivory Priesthood learn this rite. To perform the rite, the priest must first spend a day ritually purifying herself of all sins, according to the Priesthood's creed, and any negative thoughts. She must also spend a few hours mediating on the idea of her own death and her attitude towards it. A priest who is not reconciled to her own mortality can find the Dark Umbra a disturbing and unsettling place, especially in recent years when a terrible spirit storm has rendered it even more dangerous than usual.

Once the purification is complete, the Garou faces a Death's Breath spirit in the early twilight of that evening. She must let it breathe into her mouth, which sends a chill like a rod of solid ice through her body. She may then step sideways into the Dark Umbra. She may remain there until dawn the following morning.

System: The player spends a point of Gnosis and rolls Willpower (difficulty 7). If the roll fails, the rite ends and the character is plunged into a terrible Harano-like depression that costs her two dice from every dice pool for the next 24 hours. If it succeeds, the character may make a normal stepping sideways roll to enter the Dark Umbra, as described above. Once in the Dark Umbra, the priest appears as a dark patch in the normal Penumbra. If she fails to return to the material world by dawn the next morning, she is trapped in the Dark Umbra unless another Ivory Priest or a kindly Silent Strider helps her back across into the material world.

MET: Much the same any other rite, save that failure puts the Garou at a one-Trait penalty on all tests for the rest of the session. Success means the Garou has entered the Dark Umbra — the "Shadowlands" of **Oblivion** — and must exit by dawn or be trapped there until another Garou frees her.

Punishment Rites

Rite of the Omega Wolff

Level Three

The tribe takes the failure of a pack alpha very seriously indeed. If all the members of a pack agree that their alpha has failed them catastrophically, then they may enact this rite to prevent him ever becoming a pack alpha again. The pack takes their fallen alpha and sits him on a rock. They then crown him with a mock crown and bow down in pretend obeisance to him. They then stand up and commence mocking him one by one, before tearing the crown from his head and casting him to the ground. When each member of the pack has spat or urinated on the fallen alpha, the rite is done.

System: Standard Roll. The fallen alpha loses four points of Honor Renown and two points of Wisdom Renown. If he ever becomes a pack alpha again, he will lose two points of Gnosis every time the moon rises and will be unable to regain Gnosis until he relinquishes the position.

Totems

The Silver Fangs are extremely loyal to their totem, Falcon: so much so, in fact, that the majority of their pack totems tend to be from amongst his brood. Perhaps this is recognition that the totem has served them well over the centuries or an example of the tribe's ideal of loyalty. With the Apocalypse close at hand, this tradition is unlikely to change.

Totems of Respect

Merlin

Background Cost: 4

Although Merlin is far from the largest or most dangerous of birds, Merlin appears in many different ways amongst Falcon's brood. To the Fianna he is a Totem of Wisdom (see **Tribebook: Fianna**, p. 83) but the Silver Fangs know him in his guise as a Totem of Respect and as the Totem of House Blood Red Crest. Merlin, because he is one of the smallest of hawks, also tends to be swift, fierce and cunning. He is a champion of the underdog, teaching that size is far from the most important factor and that courage and intelligence are just as important, if not more so. He cautions that his children should use cunning before pure aggression and strike swiftly and with wisdom.

Traits: Packs devoted to Merlin gain three dice for their Brawl dice pools and two dice for their Dodge dice pools when confronting enemies physically larger than themselves. He also grants them three extra Willpower points per story, bolstering their courage in the fight with the Wyrm.

Ban: Followers of Merlin must not kill birds of prey of any kind, and must also spare their spirits. They may ignore this ban for raptors that the Wyrm has corrupted if, and only if, there is no hope of capturing and purifying it.

MET: Followers of Merlin are considered three Traits up on all *Brawl* tests and two Traits up on all *Dodge* tests when fighting enemies physically larger than themselves. They also gain three extra Willpower Traits per story.

Osprey

Background Cost: 5

Osprey is a skilled and wise hunter, able to pluck her prey from the river itself. Her respect amongst water elementals and fish spirits is high. Followers of Salmon (**Players Guide to the Garou**, p. 140) in particular hold Osprey's children as allies. Osprey chose House Austere Howl as her own, and for centuries she profited from her relationship as the house grew in strength and honor. However, its recent reversal in fortunes has dismayed her. Many of the underground Austere Howl packs, including Queen Mary's own pack, still honor Osprey and she tries to guide them as they seek to clear the house's name.

Traits: Followers of Osprey gain two dice to any roll taken while on or under a significant body of water. They also gain an extra dot of Perception and two dots of Athletics.

Ban: Osprey charges her followers with protecting the rivers and the seas. They must not allow or commit any action that causes a body of water to be fouled, even as slight as urination in a river.

MET: Followers of Osprey receive a free retest on all challenges made while in or under water, provided it is a fairly substantial body of water (no pools or hot tubs). They also gain the *Discerning* Mental Trait and a free level of *Athletics*.

Totems of War

Buzzard

Background Cost: 4

Buzzard is the most beloved of Falcon's brood and has been the Totem of House Crescent Moon for its entire history. Slow moving, yet graceful, Buzzard is a powerful bird that few can stop when he grows angry. He values control and precision in his followers and encourages them to learn skillful combat. The success of House Crescent Moon in bringing down the Shadow Curtain has boosted Buzzard's reputation and many young packs are now seeking Buzzard's patronage.

Traits: Packs chosen by Buzzard gain two dice to all Melee rolls and an additional point of Dexterity.

Ban: Buzzard detests the sight of Gaia's warriors fighting amongst themselves when there are so many other enemies to be fighting. He asks that his children never initiate a fight with another werewolf. This ban excludes Black Spiral Dancers.

MET: Followers of Buzzard are up two Traits on all *Melee* tests and receive a free *Graceful* Physical Trait.

Eagle

Background Cost: 7

Eagle is an awesome sight: powerful yet loyal, regal yet vicious. Eagle has chosen the youngest of the Silver Fangs houses, House Wyrmfoe, as his own. He and Falcon watch over this dynamic house and its unpredictable king carefully. Eagle was not highly regarded until recently, but the recent success of his children are rapidly making him amongst the most well known, if not trusted, of Falcon's brood.

Traits: Eagle gives each of his children two extra dice in their Brawl rolls and an extra dot of Strength. The children of Eagle are fearsome foes in hand-to-claw combat.

Ban: Eagle asks two things of his children. He asks that fallen foes are decapitated and their heads are displayed in his name, and that his followers stay absolutely faithful to their mates.

MET: Followers of Eagle are considered two Traits up on all *Brawl* tests, and receive an extra *Ferocious* Physical Trait.

Wyvern

Background Cost: 4

Despite his winged, serpentine form, Wyvern is no friend of the Wyrm. Instead, he is one of the Wyrm's most implacable foes. He often appears as a herald of war, bringing news of a major confrontation with the forces of the Wyrm. He drives all Garou, and those who follow him in particular to give everything toward the defeat of corruption and often counsels the use of trickery and ambush in combat. Wyvern's anger and viciousness make him an attractive totem for young, angry Fangs, looking to win Renown in battle with the forces of the Wyrm.

Traits: Followers of Wyvern gain +2 Alertness, +2 Primal-Urge and the Gifts: Sight from Beyond and Call of the Wyld to share between the pack.

Ban: The sight of defiled caerns distresses Wyvern greatly. His followers must protect any caern if asked for assistance, even if one of the Fera holds it. Wyvern's children must not participate in the "rescuing" of a caern from other shapeshifters and must stop such a theft occurring, should they learn of it.

MET: Followers of Wyvern gain a free level of *Alertness* and *Primal-Urge*, as well as the Gifts: *Sight from Beyond* and *Call of the Wyld*, to distribute among the pack.

Totems of Wisdom

Harrier

Background Cost: 4

Compared to many of Falcon's brood, Harrier is small, plain and unremarkable. However, her wisdom is unsurpassed and she always seeks to encourage cooperation in those who follow her. Her chosen house, Unbreakable Hearth, has learnt this lesson well.

Traits: Harrier gives her children two dots of Empathy and allows them -2 difficulty on all Social rolls to do with negotiation, truces and alliances. She also gives her children speed, to arrive on time where they are needed. Harrier's children may double standard movement rates in all forms.

Ban: Harrier cautions her children to listen before they speak, and insists that they listen to all debates for five minutes before starting to speak themselves.

MET: Followers of Harrier receive a free level of *Empathy* and are two Traits up on all Social tests regarding negotiation, truces and alliances. They also double their movement rates; this allows them to take two additional steps in combat.

Heron

Background Cost: 5

Heron is graceful and wise and appears to be a tranquil spirit to all but her children. They, however, know the truth: that Heron cannot resist poking her long beak into affairs that others would prefer remained secret. She is fussy about her children for that reason: she demands elegance, wisdom, discretion and most of all, inquisitiveness from her children. Packs that follow Heron tend to be impeccably groomed, well dressed, irreproachably polite and incurably nosey. A sept that counts followers of Heron amongst its members can expect their sudden return full of excitement and fear of their latest discovery of plots, plans and scheme of the Wyrm's minions and demands for immediate assistance in dealing with them.

Traits: Followers of Heron gain one point of Wisdom. They also gain +3 Enigmas and may add three dice to any dice pool that involves cleansing or purifying someone in Gaia's name. She also grants her followers the Gift: Open Seal, the better for them to find the secrets she loves.

Ban: Heron suggests, ever so politely, that her followers seek out and expose a new secret at least once a month. They must reveal the secrets to the whole Sept in Heron's name. The secrets must, of course, be far more than mere gossip. The information discovered must, in some way, palpably help in the fight against the Wyrm.

MET: Followers of Heron gain one Trait of Wisdom Renown, and receive a free retest on all *Enigmas* tests. They are also considered three Traits up on all actions that involve cleansing or purifying another in Gaia's name. Lastly, she grants her followers the *Open Seal* Gift, to search out the secrets she loves.

Peregrine Falcon

Background Cost: 5

Peregrine Falcon was once among the most common of Falcon's brood. Silver Fang packs all over the world served her and House Wise Heart was proud to have her as its totem. However, she no longer flies high over the world as she once did. Her earthly counterparts are dying, poisoned by a build up of pesticides in the food chain, and her House is in sharp decline. A sighting of Peregrine Falcon or news of a pack being chosen by her are both causes for celebration.

Traits: Peregrine Falcon allows her children to learn more easily. They may increase their Knowledges with experience points at a cost that is one level lower than normal. Thus a new Knowledge costs 2 experience points to learn, and each new level costs previous level x 2 to learn. She also grants her children an extra die on all Enigmas and Occult rolls. Packs whom Peregrine Falcon chooses gain two Wisdom Renown.

Ban: Peregrine Falcon demands that her children never use pesticides or weed killers of any form, and that they destroy utterly any source of such materials

they find. The children of Peregrine Falcon often avoid gardening centers and hardware stores because of this.

MET: Followers of Peregrine Falcon receive three extra Experience Traits per story (not session), which can only be spent on Abilities related to knowledge and book learning. In addition, they are considered one Trait up on all *Enigmas* and *Occult* challenges. Packs chosen by Peregrine Falcon gain two Traits of Wisdom Renown.

Totems of Cunning

Hawk

Background Cost: 4

Hawk is the most cunning of Falcon's brood. He is small, fast moving and clever and likes to trick his prey into exposing their backs so that he can use his talons to rake and his beak to hold his prey fast. He teaches his children to confuse and distract their foes, so that they may easily defeat them. Hawk is the Totem of House Gleaming Eye, which takes its name from the glint in his eye as he fools another enemy.

Traits: Hawk gives his children two dots of Subterfuge and an extra dot of Manipulation.

Ban: Hawk asks that his children tell one lie about themselves for every two truths they tell, all the better to keep those around them confused.

MET: Followers of Hawk receive a free level of *Subterfuge* as well as a free *Beguiling* Social Trait.

Fetishes

Latyr Stone

Level Three, Gnosis 6

These small, unremarkable rocks can make the difference between life and death for a Silver Fang in hostile territory. Once a werewolf activates the stone and places it on the ground or in a body of water, it will purify the nearby plants and water enough to ensure that they are safe for the werewolf to eat and drink. Each stone will purify enough food and water for a single pack.

A character can create a latyr stone by binding a water elemental into a stone taken from a river running through a caern's bawn.

Wind Whistle

Level Three, Gnosis 5

In Russian folklore, the wind is often associated with evil people who blew whistles and were on occasion suspected of summoning up the wind. Those tales are simply Delirium-twisted memories of this fetish. A single, long blow on this whistle will summon a

freezing cold wind, laced with snow. It will cover the tracks of the werewolf using the whistle, and his pack if appropriate, while chilling the bones of any pursuers, costing them one die from every roll while they continue to pursue the owner of the wind whistle. The effects of the whistle last for one hour.

The Garou make this fetish by binding a wind elemental into a whistle carved from the bone of an animal that died of the cold during the winter months.

MET: Once activated, this fetish obscures the tracks of the Garou and her pack, putting those in pursuit three Traits down on all tests to follow their passing.

Alpha Klaive

Level Four, Gnosis 8

This is a variation on the klaive unique to the Silver Fangs. This weapon acknowledges that sometimes good leadership is a better quality in an alpha than pure destructive power. Instead of binding a war-spirit into the blade, the blade forger uses a falcon-spirit. Instead of doing aggravated damage against all opponents, the weapon now aids the alpha in making crucial tactical and battlefield decisions, boosting his effective Leadership by two dots.

The difficulty to attack with an alpha klaive is 7, as there is no war-spirit to aid the wielder, but it still inflicts Strength +2 lethal damage. Werewolves cannot soak damage from the weapon and still treat the klaive's wounds as aggravated, because it is made of silver. The bearer loses one point from his Gnosis rating while carrying the weapon.

MET: Bearers of an Alpha Klaive receive a free retest on all *Leadership* challenges made while carrying or wielding the klaive. Otherwise, it is considered an ordinary klaive for purposes of damage, Bonus Traits, Gnosis loss, etc.

Talens

Falcon's Arrows

Gnosis 6

Falcon's keen eyes allow him to see enemies at a distance. He understands that attacking at range is sometimes the wisest strategy and he encourages his children to learn this lesson. Sometimes, to help them, he allows them to take feathers from living falcons to craft Falcon's Arrows. These exquisitely wrought arrows have tips of silver and are fletched with falcon feathers. They fly as fast and true as Falcon himself swooping on his prey. All Archery rolls made with these arrows are at -1 difficulty. Despite their silver tips, any Silver Fang carrying them suffers no Gnosis penalty.

Poppy Leaf Bandage

Gnosis 4

It is a leader's burden to go on fighting, however terrible his wounds. The poppy leaf bandage will stop an aggravated wound from worsening, and each bandage applied will also allow the werewolf to ignore one level of wound penalties. Once he removes the bandage, or a day passes, the wound commences bleeding once more, the werewolf starts to deteriorate, and the wound penalties return over the course of an hour.

This talen is made from the leaf of a poppy with an ice spirit bound within.

Allied Spirits

Leshii

Rage 5, Gnosis 8, Willpower 7, Essence 20

Charms: Airt Sense, Create Winds, Disorient, Materialize, Realm Sense, Shapeshift, Tracking

Image: Leshii appear as normal human beings with something slightly odd about them that marks them as different: extremely pale eyes, for example, or a complete lack of a shadow. Some leshii appear with bark-like skin, or a bright green beard.

History: Even today, Russians living on the edges of forests fear and respect the leshii. These forest spirits guard the laws of the forest, and turn it against those who ignore those laws. They raise great storms, make paths disappear and confuse and mislead travelers until they drop dead of hunger or exhaustion. Foresters appeased the spirit with a gift of an egg dyed red or a slice of bread sprinkled with salt.

Habitat: Werewolves can find leshii in forests. Each leshii is territorial and will fight with any other leshii that intrudes on his area of the forest.

Spiritual Correspondences: Leshii are spirits of the forest and retribution.

Material Correspondences: Leshii will only respond to summons on paths in the forest. If a werewolf summons a leshii while off a path, he is likely to be attacked. Leshii have a fondness for bread and salt, as noted above.

Gift Law: Leshii can teach Gifts pertaining to wind, storms and plants.

Taboos: Leshii never leave their forests for any reason. They never consent to be in the presence of another leshii, even one bound into a fetish or talen.

Attitude: Leshii are loud and unpredictable, but generally welcoming to respectful Garou. In the middle of a conversation, he may make bird or animal noises, shriek with laughter or clap his hands loudly to illustrate a point, with a noise so loud as startle nearby birds.

Chiminage: Before a leshii will treat with the werewolf, he may demand that she clears his area of forest of all traces of humanity, including litter and other marks of man's thoughtless passage.

Domovoi

Rage 6, Gnosis 7, Willpower 5, Essence 17

Charms: Disorient, Materialize, Realm Sense (house and garden), Shapeshift, Start Fires

Image: The domovoi looks like a short, gnarled old man, with untidy hair and a gray beard that all but covers his face apart from a pair of sharp, bright eyes. He is covered from head to toe in soft fur and sometimes shapeshifts into the form of a cat, dog, rat or frog.

History: Domovoi spirits seem to have arisen out of the respect a family has for its ancestors. Some say that they are Kin fetches grown more powerful. He watches over both the animals and the people of the farm, warning them of impending danger. Sometimes people staying in the household would awake to find themselves pinched black and blue, a warning of their hostile intent. If a family member woke at night to the touch of a furry hand, they knew some disaster was on the way.

Habitat: These spirits of the family reside in the Penumbra around the family home, often in the equivalent of rough location of the stove or oven in the material world. Should the chosen family move, the domovoi would follow them.

Spiritual Correspondences: Domovoi are spirits of the hearth and family.

Material Correspondences: As family spirits, domovoi can only be summoned near the family home or other family members. They respond far more readily to summons from people related to their chosen family.

Gift Law: Domovoi can teach Gifts pertaining to fortune telling and warmth.

Taboos: Domovoi never willingly leave the general vicinity of a household of their chosen family. They will never inflict harm on a member of that family.

Attitude: Domovoi are quiet and shy, and generally only appear when nobody else is around. They can, on occasions, be extremely mischievous, especially if they think no one is playing any attention.

Chiminage: Domovoi can be charmed with a bowl of porridge or some bread. He only consents to help those who are related to his chosen family.

Merits and Flaws

Merits and Flaws are introduced as an optional component of character creation in the **Players Guide to the Garou**. They are, as noted there, entirely

optional and may be disallowed by the Storyteller. Any choice of Merit or Flaw should be discussed and agreed on by the Storyteller to ensure that they don't conflict with her ideas and plans about the game. Some bend the rules of the game or limit the character and the chronicle in unusual ways. However, used well they can add extra color and detail to the character and give great plot hooks for the chronicle.

Notable Heritage (2 pt Merit)

This merit can represent one of two things. It may mean that the character is from a family that is particularly renowned amongst the Garou for its deeds down through the centuries. Notable examples include the Morningkills, the Delacourts and the Tvarivich Dynasty. This is not the same thing as the Background: Pure Breed, which represents the relative perfection of the Garou line as expressed in the individual. This Merit represents the general fame accorded to the family for the deeds of Garou and Kinfolk both. The character is at -1 difficulty to Social rolls with other Garou and Kinfolk who are aware of werewolf society. This Merit does carry with it the expectation that the werewolf live up to the family name. If he fails to do so, he may find the benefits of the Merit fading with time, as the stories of his own failings start to outweigh the high regard the family receives.

Alternatively, the Merit may represent membership of a family famous in human circles: a royal family, like the Windsors of the United Kingdom or a political dynasty, like the Bushes and Kennedy's in the USA. While the Merit does not convey any property or financial gain, it may well carry a title in a monarchy. The character can expect invitations to all the best parties and is at -1 difficulty to all Social rolls when dealing with humans aware of his heritage.

MET: Garou with this Merit are one Trait up on all Social tests with other Garou and any Kinfolk aware of werewolf society; this benefit is cumulative to any gained from the *Pure Breed* Background as well. Characters with a famous human name receive the same benefit with humans and any Garou who pay special attention to the movers and shakers of human society, such as Glass Walkers, Silver Fangs or Shadow Lords.

Hubris (3 pt Flaw)

The Silver Fangs are the chosen children of Falcon and the appointed leaders of the Garou Nation. They are purer in their breeding than their cousins in the other tribes are. They have much, in fact, to be proud of. However, some of the tribe take this pride too far, passing through arrogance into hubris. They look down their noses at their fellows from "lesser tribes" and even members of their own tribe of less pure breeding. They consider themselves the best-suited werewolves for any task and always assume that they are the alpha of any gathering. They struggle to keep the disdain and condescension out of their voice when dealing with others and sometimes even aggravate the spirits with their offhand behavior.

In short, a character with this Flaw is a right, royal pain in the ass. The character's behavior earns her a +2 difficulty on *all* Social rolls with perceived inferiors (which are just about everybody). She also tends to overestimate her own abilities, putting her and those around her in danger.

MET: This Flaw goes beyond the *Condescending* Negative Trait (though chances are the character has that as well), to the realm of nearly staggering arrogance. The Garou suffers a one-Trait penalty on all Social tests with anyone of perceived inferior social standing — and that's just about everyone — and tends to overestimate not only the goodwill of her peers but her own capabilities as well, sometimes with disastrous results. Naturally, when things go wrong it still isn't her fault; one of the little people must have screwed it up, big time!

Harano Prone (4 pt Flaw)

Harano, the terrible depression and sadness that can render the most powerful and renowned of Garou warriors less useful than a newly changed pup, can strike any member of any tribe. However, it seems that certain members of the Silver Fangs are more prone to short, yet less crippling doses of Harano that can hamper their effectiveness as warriors of Gaia and leaders of the Garou. Characters suffering from the Flaw are prone to bouts of deep depression, indolence and mood swings.

The player must make a Willpower roll every scene in which the werewolf suffers some form of setback. If the roll fails, the Silver Fang falls into a bout of temporary Harano. He may become morose and inactive, or suddenly spring into self-destructive activity. In rules terms, the Silver Fangs perceptions go awry and they lose a die from each of their dice pools. Should the player botch the roll, the character acquires a temporary Derangement from the list in this book (below).

The player can delay the Harano attack for a single scene by spending a Willpower point.

MET: Garou with this Flaw must make a Willpower test after any scene in which they encounter some setback to their plans, with a difficulty dependant on how serious of a setback was encountered (low for something minor like a minor delay or trivial concern, high for the death of an ally or the ruin of a long-term plan). Should the Garou fail, she enters a

mild form of Harano for the rest of the session, suffering a one-Trait penalty on all challenges and generally suffering from depression, idleness and mood swings. Should the Garou fail after a particularly devastating setback, the Storyteller may even rule that a temporary Derangement has been gained, which passes after the bout of Harano has ended. A Garou may stave off a bout of this Harano for a scene by spending a Willpower Trait, though a particular bout may only be held off once in this fashion.

The Silver Fang Curse

The **Werewolf Storytellers Companion** introduced a set of optional rules for tribal weaknesses. These are particular common quirks that every member possesses due to some particular characteristic of the tribe. In the case of the Silver Fangs, that "quirk" is madness. If your Storyteller chooses to use these rules (and remember that these are *optional*), each and every Fang possesses their own mental affliction. The other tribes speculate that this is some sign of Gaia's displeasure, the Wyrm's taint or even the result of simple inbreeding. A very few Silver Fangs know the truth: that it is a curse that the tribe brought upon itself by betraying their pact with Luna and making a deal with Helios to extend their right to rule indefinitely. They are lunatics in the truest sense of the word.

Playing the Curse

These Derangements are not an occasional inconvenience for your character; they are an integral part of their character and should be treated as such. From the moment your character underwent his First Change, this affliction has been part of their life. Indeed, many Silver Fangs refuse to acknowledge their mental quirks as illnesses, but maintain that they are part of who they are and a mark of Luna's favor. Ironically, that is the exact opposite of the truth.

The Derangement should be so much a part of the way you roleplay the character that your fellow players should only really be consciously aware that it is a Derangement when it kicks into high gear in times of stress. Even those Derangements which specify that they only really take hold in traumatic situations, like Fugue, can be incorporated into a character by giving him a tendency to let his attention wander easily and a habit of zoning out every now and again at non-critical moments.

A few of the Derangements, like Multiple Personalities and Schizophrenia will have a profound effect on how well the character functions. We offer them here for those players who want a significant roleplaying challenge from their character and you should not choose them lightly.

Lastly, if you treat the Derangements humorously, you both devalue their power in the game and encourage the other players to take your character less seriously. That's not to say that there can't be the occasional humorous moment arising out of a Derangement kicking in. However, playing out the character's battle with their condition is far more rewarding for you and the other players if every one treats it seriously. The whole tribe labors under a serious curse from one of the major powers of the setting. It is not a burden to trifled with.

Derangements

A number of possible Derangements are listed in the **Werewolf Storytellers Companion**. We reproduce them here for convenience's sake, along with some additional options.

Amnesia — In time of stress or trauma, you forget who you are or what you're doing. The memory will return once the stress has passed.

Ennui — You become easily bored and jaded. It takes significant effort on your part, or that of your packmates, to raise you from this emotionally deadened state.

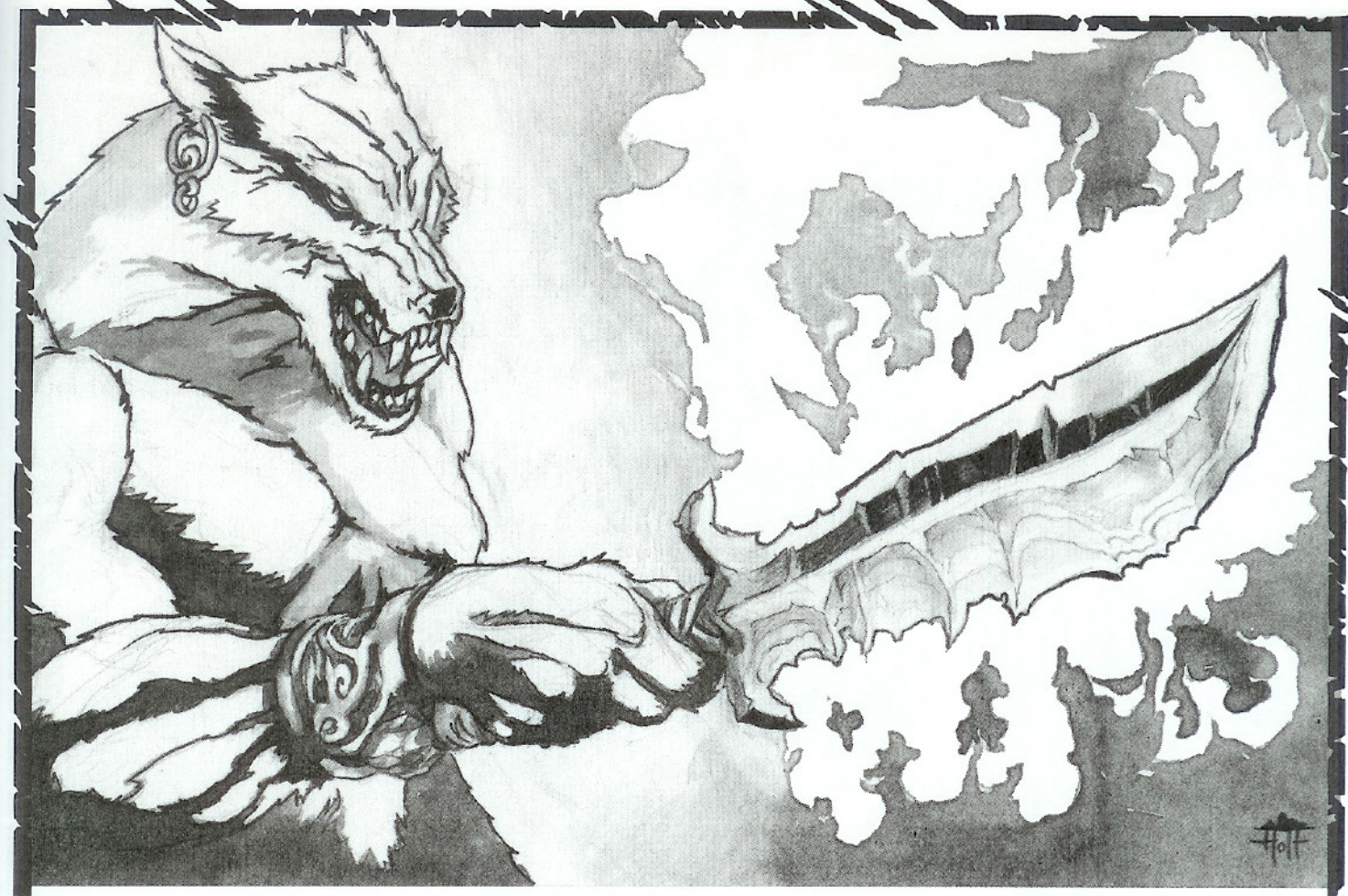
Fugue — In times of intense stress, you enter a trance-like state in which you continue what you were doing in a zombie-like state. If snapped out of the state by a packmate shaking you or the attack of an enemy, you have no memory of what occurred during the fugue.

Hysteria — You are unable to control your emotions at the best of times and are prone to wild mood swings when subject to stress and anxiety. At all other times you tend to over-react emotionally to events. Something slightly sad will cause great floods of tears, whilst you anger knows no bounds, even for a Garou.

Intellectualization — You tend to over-analyze everything. You subject every experience to rational analysis and block or ignore your emotions as far as possible. Should extreme emotion or displays of inexplicable supernatural might shatter this control, you must roll for frenzy.

Isolation — You often need to distance yourself from your packmates and companions emotionally, becoming withdrawn and uncommunicative. When this mood strikes you, you won't communicate with more than a grunt or wave of the hand or tail.

Manic-Depression — You are an emotional powder keg at all times. You can swing from despair to ecstasy at the slightest trigger. To be honest, there's



little rhyme or reason to these changes and virtually anything can set off a mood swing. One moment you're on top of the world. The next, you're in the deepest depression.

Multiple Personalities — You have more than one active personality in your head, although only one of them is in charge at any one time. Under stress, the dominant personality will change, bringing with it a new Nature, Demeanor and even name. These personalities are probably aware of each other and know what the others have been doing. However, some personalities may be totally isolated from the others and only come to the fore when you have to do something you would rather not remember doing.

Obsession — You have a tendency to latch onto someone or something as the defining factor of your life. Everything you do tends to revolve around your obsession and your packmates have problems getting you to shut up about it. Your obsession may stay fixed, or it might jump from target to target.

Paranoia — The Wyrm is everywhere! Why can't everyone else see it? Maybe the Wyrm has gotten to them too! You see the Wyrm's influence in everything that is slightly out of the ordinary.

Perfection — Your life should be perfect, so you work constantly to make it so. If that means devoting all your energies to stopping things going wrong, like your lover leaving you or losing status in the pack, well so be it. However, should something go wrong, you have to roll to avoid frenzy.

Power Madness — You are obsessed with gaining control or dominance over others. You will manipulate and lie to them to that end.

Regression — In times of extreme stress, you revert to a childlike (or cublike, of course) state, perceiving everything in simple terms and looking to others for reassurance and protection.

Schizophrenia — You hear voices which tell you what to do and impart secrets to you. At times of stress, these voices become louder and your perceptions of the world change. Your actions become unpredictable and make little sense to anyone but yourself.

Vengeful — When anyone wrongs or slights you, your desire for vengeance starts to take over your life. They longer you go without revenging yourself on them, the more you obsess over it.

Chapter Four: Nobility

"Give me my robe, put on my crown; I have
Immortal longings in me."
—William Shakespeare, *Antony and Cleopatra*

Since the dawn of Garou history, the Silver Fangs have led them in their mission to defend Mother Gaia from those who would hurt Her. There was a time, or so the tribe believes, that the other tribes followed the Fangs willingly, respecting their rightful place as the alpha tribe of the Garou Nation. Few are under the illusion that this is the case any longer.

Too many Fangs have abused their power, led unwisely or surrendered to the Wyrm's temptations or the lure of madness. Now each Silver Fang has to win the respect of her peers in the other tribes with each swing of her klaive, howl of victory and wise word spoken at a moot. Respect and the right to lead are hard won, but perhaps that is Falcon's will, hardening his tribe for the trials they will face in the final days before the Apocalypse comes. Falcon's brother Phoenix has spoken, and the day of doom is near at hand. Every Fang must do her best to live up to her ancestors' names.

Many among the werewolves believe the time of the Silver Fangs has already past and that the madness and corruption that dogs them has already mortally wounded the tribe.

However, there is hope. Queen Tvarivich of House Crescent Moon has won great victories in Russia and is starting to make her presence known in Europe. King Albrecht of House Wyrmfoe wears the Silver Crown and great Falcon has bestowed his blessing on the rough-edged American king more than once. Perhaps the tribe is due a renaissance, if there's enough time left before the Apocalypse. For the young Silver Fangs, the pressure has never been greater.

Class Joker

Quote: *Oh, c'mon. Haven't you got a sense of humor? I'm a mule, it's not like I'm a threat.*

Prelude: You've always thought that anyone who believes that Silver Fang kids have it easy should spend a few years at one of the Kinfolk academies, in the metis classes. You don't know who your real parents were, as you were transferred far away from them as soon as you were born. You were raised in the bawn of a major caern, and taught alongside two other metis likewise brought from across the country, in separate classes from the human Kin.

As you got a little older, and better able to control yourself, you were allowed to play with the human teenagers. You quickly discovered that they'd been trained to despise you and believed that you were inherently inferior. The withered arm certainly didn't help matters. The worse the taunting got, the more you stoked your anger, until you were filled with Rage. Before you could even touch a hair on one of the precious little darlings' heads, the genuine werewolf supervising the school slapped you down hard.

After a few months of beatings, you decided the best way to avoid them was to not get taunted. After a few more unsuccessful months, you twigged that making your school "mates" laugh by playing the clown was the way to do it. It only took a few more months before the other kids started to leave you alone, because you made them laugh. Much to your surprise, the elder Garou seemed to respect you for what you did, and your life got easier from that point onwards.

After a while you started to experiment with putting those who had made your life miserable in their place by turning your jokes on them. A few of them lost control and attacked you, and this time they got the beating. Your elders seemed even more impressed.

When, finally, your First Change came and you could take your place amongst the other werewolves, you reputation for cunning and mockery was such that it almost outweighed the stigma of your birth. An older Ragabash, a lupus at that, has taken your under her wing and is teaching you the tools of your trade. Even the werewolf kings need their jesters, she teaches you, to allow them to truly see who is worthy and who is not.

Concept: You're a metis made good by accepting and relishing your place in the stratified Silver Fang hierarchy. Sure, you're a metis, but you're not going to let that stop you. You're going to be the best damn Ragabash in the Garou Nation one day.

Roleplaying Notes: Most of the times you're pretty damn submissive, letting everyone around you know that you realize your lowly station. However, you're perceptive and cunning and watch everyone for signs of a short temper and visible weak spot. When you find it, you start niggling at it with words and jokes, to see if your targets can take it. If they do, they earn your respect. If they fail, well, it's your duty to make sure the rest of the sept knows of their failings.

Equipment: A set of unprepossessing smart clothes, a large collection of notebooks and a camera.

Silver Fangs™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Breed: Metis
Auspice: Ragabash
Camp:

Pack Name:
Pack Totem:
Concept: Class Clown

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●○○○	Charisma (Comedic)	●●●●○	Perception	●●●○○
Dexterity	●●●○○	Manipulation (Two-faced)	●●●●○	Intelligence	●●○○○
Stamina	●●●○○	Appearance	●●○○○	Wits	●●●○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	●●○○○	Animal Ken	○○○○○	Computer	○○○○○
Athletics	●●○○○	Crafts	○○○○○	Enigmas	●○○○○
Brawl	○○○○○	Drive	○○○○○	Investigation	●●○○○
Dodge	●○○○○	Etiquette	○○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	●●●○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Linguistics	●○○○○
Expression	●●●○○	Leadership	○○○○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	○○○○○	Melee	○○○○○	Occult	○○○○○
Primal-Urge	●●○○○	Performance	●●●○○	Politics	●●●○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Stealth	●●○○○	Rituals	●●○○○
Subterfuge	●●○○○	Survival	○○○○○	Science	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Gifts	Gifts
Mentor	●●●○○	Blur of the Milky Eye	
PureBreed	●●●○○	Lambent Flame	
	○○○○○	Sense Wyrm	
	○○○○○		
	○○○○○		

Renown

Glory ○○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□
Honor ●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□
Wisdom ●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Rank 1

Rage ●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Gnosis ●●●○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Willpower ●●●○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Health

Bruised		□
Hurt	-1	□
Injured	-1	□
Wounded	-2	□
Mauled	-2	□
Crippled	-5	□
Incapacitated		□

Tribal Weakness
DERANGEMENT

Moon Lodge Cultist

Quote: *Mother Moon has changed her face. We must all change with her.*

Prelude: Even as a cub you were different. Your littermates wanted to play fight with you, but all you wanted to do was stare at the moon and sniff around in strange places. As the moon changed her face, you could feel your moods changing. When her face was full, you were angry, fighting with the other cubs and running with the pack as it hunted down its prey. When she hid her face, you became playful.

Your littermates found this behavior puzzling and disturbing and started to shun you. When you went to the older wolves for comfort, they weren't interested either, nipping at you until you went away. For long months you hung around the edge of the pack, getting what food you could and taking solace from the sweet face of the moon hanging in the sky. Things slowly got worse over the following months, though, and you were all but driven from the pack.

One afternoon, when the moon was still hidden and the sun beat down, you heard the pack's hunters howling in pain and anger. A group of human hunters had found them and was picking them off one by one. You felt the anger surge in you, like it did when the moon's face was full and you exploded into frantic combat. When you'd done with the hunters, some of the pack had fled in fear, others were busy urinating in submission and the hunters were all dead. A few days later, your father and his friends came for you.

On that terrible day when you'd discovered your true nature, even as your body exploded into its First Change, you started to understand why the moon had affected you so. You only gained complete understanding some months later when and your newfound Silver Fang littermates of newly changed cubs were taught of the Moon Lodge of the tribe. While most of the new werewolves were struggling with the idea of finding their role in society defined by their birth — homids can be so blind sometimes — you were delighting in the idea that Mother Luna was calling you to change your behavior to match her moods, just as you'd always done.

Concept: You're a wolf with a love for the moon and a natural affinity with her phases that most homids find alien. You have a knack for dealing with Lunes and have caught the eye of members of the Moon Lodge.

Roleplaying Notes: While you're a straightforward and direct character by nature, Luna takes her toll on you as she changes her face. You can be playful, otherworldly, calm, talkative and aggressive as the month goes by. You're constantly seeking to remind your packmates of the role Luna and the other spirits play in their lives and encourage them to follow your example. You deal with Lunes and other spirits associated with Luna whenever you can, seeking to glean new insights into her ways.

Equipment: Borrowed clothes, a fetish with bound Lunes, documents charting the phases of the moon and observations made with each passage.

Silver Fangs™

Name: | Breed: Lupus | Pack Name:
Player: | Auspice: Theurge | Pack Totem:
Chronicle: | Camp: | Concept: Moon Lodge Cultist

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●○○○	Charisma	●●○○○	Perception	●●●○○
Dexterity	●●○○○	Manipulation	●○○○○	Intelligence	●●●○○
Stamina	●●●○○	Appearance	●●●○○	Wits	●●●●○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	●●●○○	Animal Ken	●●●○○	Computer	○○○○○
Athletics	●●○○○	Crafts	○○○○○	Enigmas	●○○○○
Brawl	●●●○○	Drive	○○○○○	Investigation	○○○○○
Dodge	●●●○○	Etiquette	●○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	●○○○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Linguistics	○○○○○
Expression	●●○○○	Leadership	●○○○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	●○○○○	Melee	○○○○○	Occult	●○○○○
Primal-Urge	●●○○○	Performance	●○○○○	Politics	○○○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Stealth	●●●○○	Rituals	●●●○○
Subterfuge	○○○○○	Survival	●●●○○	Science	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Gifts	Gifts
Fetish	●○○○○	Heightened Senses	
PureBreed	●●●○○	New Moon's Laughter	
Rites	●●○○○	Spirit Speech	
	○○○○○		
	○○○○○		

Renown: Glory ○○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□ Honor ○○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□ Wisdom ●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Rank: 1

Rage: ●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

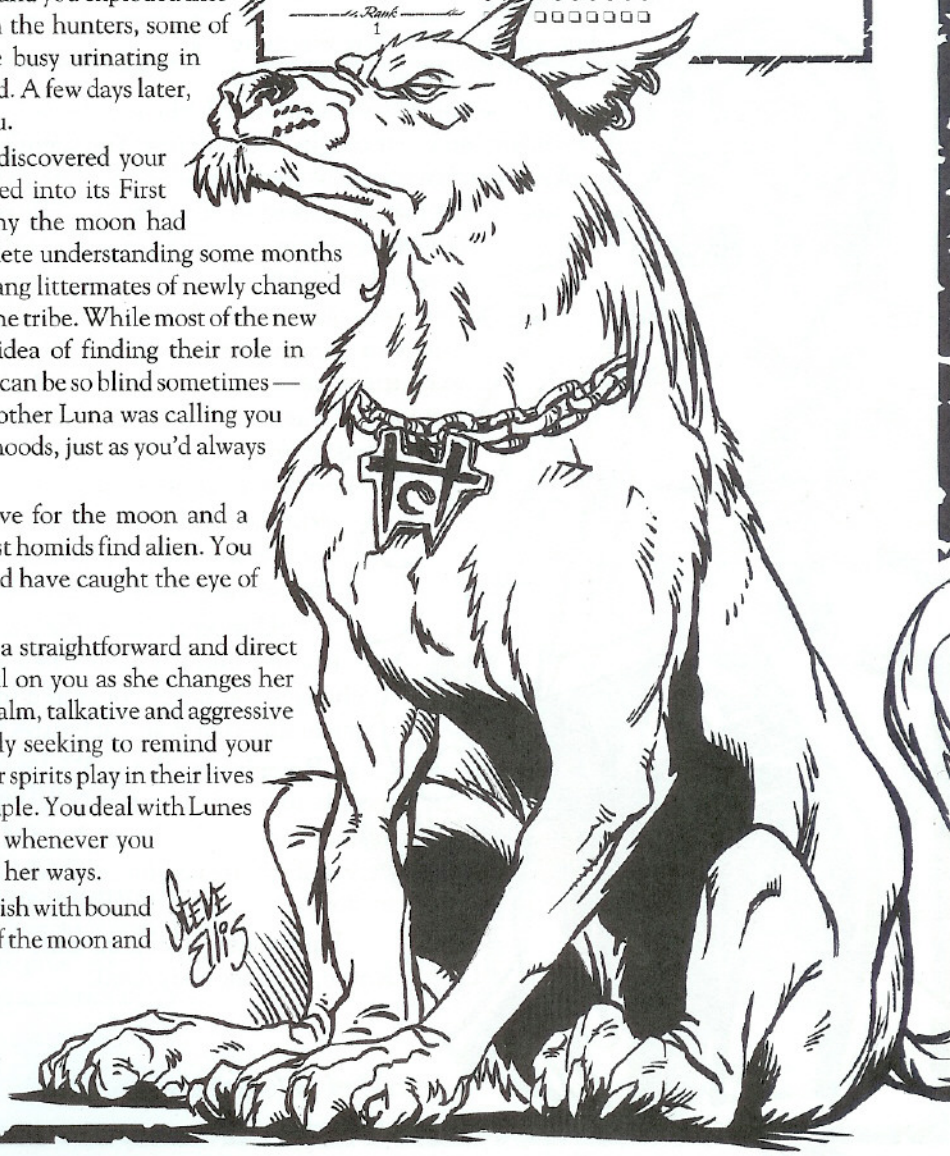
Gnosis: ●●●●○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Willpower: ●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Health:

Bruised		□
Hurt	-1	□
Injured	-1	□
Wounded	-2	□
Mauled	-2	□
Crippled	-5	□
Incapacitated		□

Tribal Weakness: DERANGEMENT



Minor Royal

Quote: *And what do you do? How interesting.*

Prelude: When other cubs go on about how different they feel now, you just sigh and turn away. You've always been different, and in some ways being a werewolf has actually made your life simpler by giving you the purpose you've always looked for.

You were born into one of Europe's royal lines, far enough away from the throne that you stood no chance of ever being crowned, but close enough that the tabloid press took an interest in you. From the day you were old enough to understand, people talked to you about how special you were, what responsibilities you had and your duty to the family. All you could see was that you had little or no choice in the way that you lived your life and no real power to exercise in return. Frankly, you were beginning to run a little wild. You attended a few parties your parents wouldn't approve of, and started hanging around with some pretty disreputable types. The tabloid press got hold of it and the family sent you off to university quickly, in the hope that you'd settle down. You had no intention of letting that happen.

Then you met Lisa. She was quite a bit older than you and a respected professor at the university you attended. She was the only person there that treated you like any other student, and that caught your interest. You spent more and more time with her, and she awoke in you both a social conscience and a desire to use the royal prestige to bring worthy issues to the fore. It worked for a while, too. The press carried several stories about your work with environmental charities and other causes and you finally felt like you were making a difference. Then the probing really started. They ran kiss-and-tell stories by old lovers and started to insinuate that you and Lisa were lovers. One night, a paparazzo snapped you leaving Lisa's flat. You lost your temper, everything went red and when you came round, you were half-naked and the paparazzo was dead. Two distant relations you hadn't seen in years found you and introduced you to the wider family. You were nervous at first, horrified next but now you're slowly coming to terms with your new existence and even finding some joy in it. You have power at last, even if it is mainly physical. Maybe you can have more impact as a Silver Fang than you ever did as a royal.

Concept: You're the latest werewolf born from a blue-blooded line of Kinfolk. Life as a werewolf gives you the power to makes the changes you never could as a minor royal, but you're determined to make sure that your packmates keep in mind the goals of the Garou.

Roleplaying Notes: You're no alpha, but when you talk, you expect people to listen. You carry yourself with self-possession and a touch of arrogance but are a surprisingly good listener. The visceral side of life as a werewolf still freaks you out from time to time, but you're getting used to it, slowly.

Equipment: Designer suit, mobile phone, chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce, Kinfolk bodyguard.

Silver Fangs

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Breed: Homid
Auspice: Philodox
Camp:

Pack Name:
Pack Totem:
Concept: Minor Royal

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●○○○	Charisma	●●●○○	Perception	●●○○○
Dexterity	●●●○○	Manipulation	●●●○○	Intelligence	●●●○○
Stamina	●●○○○	Appearance Regal	●●●●○	Wits	●●○○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	●●○○○	Animal Ken	●○○○○	Computer	●○○○○
Athletics	●○○○○	Crafts	○○○○○	Enigmas	○○○○○
Brawl	○○○○○	Drive	●●○○○	Investigation	●○○○○
Dodge	○○○○○	Etiquette	●●●○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	●●○○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Linguistics	●●●○○
Expression	○○○○○	Leadership	●●●○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	○○○○○	Melee	●○○○○	Occult	○○○○○
Primal-Urge	○○○○○	Performance	●●●○○	Politics	●●●○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Stealth	○○○○○	Rituals	○○○○○
Subterfuge	●○○○○	Survival	○○○○○	Science	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Gifts	Gifts
Contacts	●●●○○	Persuasion	
Kinfolk	●●○○○	Sense Wyrm	
PureBreed	●●●○○	Truth of Gaia	
Resources	●●●●●		
	○○○○○		

Renown
Glory ○○○○○○○○○○
Honor ●●●○○○○○○○
Wisdom ○○○○○○○○○○
Rank 1

Rage ●●●○○○○○○○
Gnosis ●○○○○○○○○○
Willpower ●●●○○○○○○○

Health

Bruised	
Hurt	-1
Injured	-1
Wounded	-2
Mauled	-2
Crippled	-5
Incapacitated	

Tribal Weakness
DERANGEMENT

Genealogist

Quote: *You're from the Tvarivich dynasty, correct? I think you'll find that the tale of your great-grandmother may have some bearing on your problem.*

Prelude: Frankly, you weren't considered a great prospect for a true-blooded Garou. You never showed any signs of the wolf within as you grew up amongst a community of Kinfolk. Your Dad worked as security for the local sept leader and your Mum — an Ahroun — was always off fighting against some creature or other. You were quiet, bookish and a determined student. You were good at most subjects, but it was the special lessons about the great Silver Fang families that fascinated you the most. You would spend hours in the record rooms, studying the family trees and growing ever more annoyed at the growing gaps, as the record keepers started losing track of Kinfolk that had moved away. What's more, you learned that there were parts of the trees that were never recorded because the liaisons were secret and illegitimate. This annoyed you even more.

Still, you persevered and you could soon reel off whole lineages with ease. You even started learning stories about the key members of dynasties you'd memorized. Your future with the Silver Fang genealogists seemed assured.

Then, one day, after a rough tackle on the games pitch, you lost your temper and changed into the Crinos for the first time. You badly wounded a schoolmate before the shocked instructors were able to summon help to restrain you. Then the serious work to train you as one of the Garou began. As you were tutored in the great legends of the tribe and the whole Garou Nation, you would always put in some extra-curricular work to learn the family trees of the heroes of the tales. Your reputation for knowing a tale of an ancestor of any Silver Fang at a gathering quickly grew.

Now, you're working with a pack and fighting the good fight. In your rare off–duty times, though, you learn more tales and try to track down the missing branches of the family trees. You're constantly getting your packmates into trouble as a result but as you've tracked down a few dozen Kinfolk and a lost cub, nobody minds too much.

Concept: You're a werewolf genealogist, even more obsessed with breeding and lineage than the rest of the tribe. You can see that family trees are just another form of story and they're the stories that appeal to you most.

Roleplaying Notes: Most of the time, you're pretty quiet for a Galliard, keeping yourself to yourself and your nose in the family histories. That all changes when you have an audience that wants to hear about their ancestors. You have a knack for making people feel good about their families and letting them see the best qualities of those heroes reflected in themselves. When you get a whiff of a missing part of a Silver Fang bloodline, you're unstoppable until you've followed every lead and found the missing relatives.

Equipment: Scruffy, nondescript clothing, a large bag stuffed full of photocopied birth records, newspaper cuttings and old photographs, a laptop with genealogy software and a scanner.

Silver Fangs

Name: | Breed: Homid | Pack Name:
Player: | Auspice: Galliard | Pack Totem:
Chronicle: | Camp: | Concept: Family Historian

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●○○○	Charisma	●●●○○	Perception	●●●○○
Dexterity	●●○○○	Manipulation	●●●○○	Intelligence	●●●●○
Stamina	●●○○○	Appearance	●●○○○	Wits	●●●○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	●○○○○	Animal Ken	○○○○○	Computer	●●●○○
Athletics	○○○○○	Crafts	○○○○○	Enigmas	●○○○○
Brawl	●●○○○	Drive	●●○○○	Investigation	●●●○○
Dodge	●●○○○	Etiquette	●●○○○	Law	●○○○○
Empathy	●○○○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Linguistics	○○○○○
Expression	●●○○○	Leadership	●○○○○	Medicine	●●○○○
Intimidation	○○○○○	Melee	●○○○○	Occult	●○○○○
Primal-Urge	○○○○○	Performance	●●●○○	Politics	●●○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Stealth	○○○○○	Rituals	○○○○○
Subterfuge	●●○○○	Survival	○○○○○	Science	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Gifts	Gifts
Ancestors	●●○○○	Call of the Wyld	
Kinfolk	●●●○○	Persuasion	
PureBreed	●●●○○	Sense Wyrm	
Resources	●●○○○		
	○○○○○		

Renown

Glory ●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□
Honor ○○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□
Wisdom ●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Rank 1

Rage ●●●○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

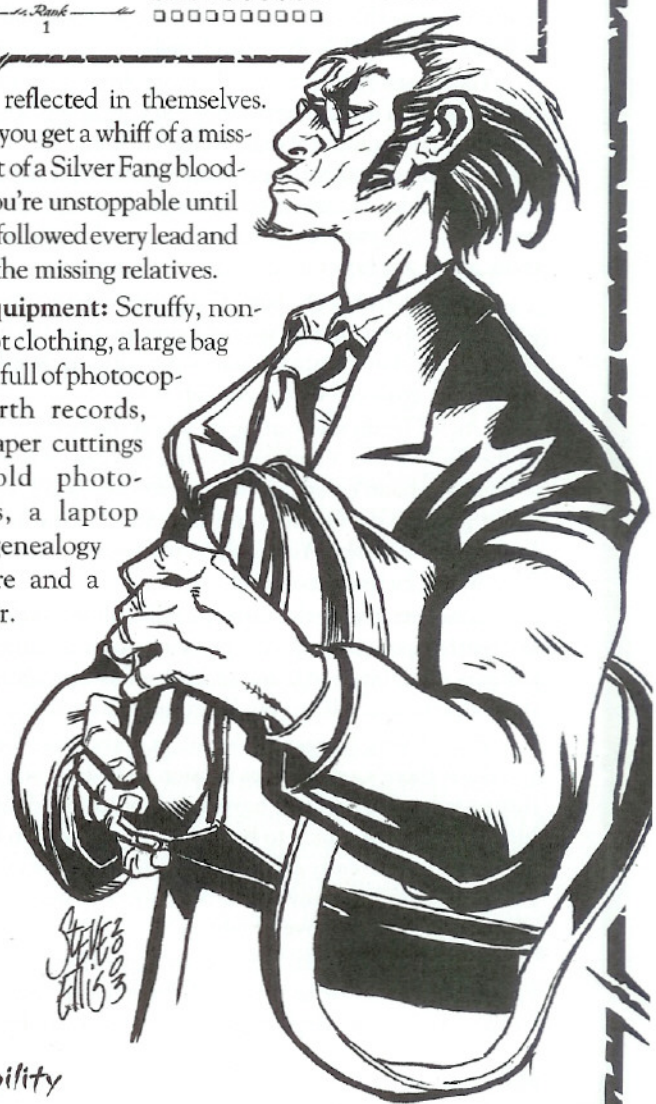
Gnosis ●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Willpower ●●●○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Health

Bruised	□
Hurt -1	□
Injured -1	□
Wounded -2	□
Mauled -2	□
Crippled -5	□
Incapacitated	□

Tribal Weakness
DERANGEMENT



Extreme Sports Junkie

Quote: *Let's do it, guys. We can freefall right into the heart of the Wyrmhole and gut the bastard before he knows we're coming. Are you in?*

Prelude: A life of wealth and privilege? Oh, how terribly, terribly dull. One could go out of one's mind with boredom sitting around the old pile with servants to wait on you hand and foot. It's all far, far too tedious for words. You played rugby at school and enjoyed that far more than learning, which was a bore, quite honestly. It's not like you needed qualification to get a job or anything. Daddy's friends in one of the banks could see to that. Polo was a decent distraction, too.

Luckily a few chums from school introduced you to snow boarding one vacation. For the first time in years you really felt alive.

From there it was a quick step into base-jumping, streetluge and cave diving. For the next couple of years, you spent your chunk of the family fortune in pursuing your hobbies. You were good. Damn good, in fact. You became known for your fearlessness, and people started asking to come with you on trips. It quickly dawned on you that this was far more fun than working for a bank and you turned your hobby into a business. Soon you were organizing trips for the more adrenaline-addicted members of the extreme sports community. Your family tolerated it, always muttering something about "growing out of it eventually." That's not what happened in the end, though.

You'd been getting more and more irritable for months and had cut back on the number of trips you were doing. The dreams that were keeping you awake at night weren't helping. Still, you persevered and were doing an illegal base-jump with a couple of pals, when one of them fumbled the whole thing and went careering into you on the way down. The two of you plummeted earthwards, and all you could think about was how furious you were that you were about to die.

You didn't, though. Something happened to you on the way down, and you were able to save yourself, slowing your fall by driving your claws (claws, what claws?) into the side of the building. It still hurt like hell when you hit the ground, but you got better fast.

Uncle Gerald was waiting for you at the bottom. He stuffed you in the back of a van and got you the hell out of there. You were amazed: you hadn't seen Gerald since you were a kid. That evening, he let you into the family secret and introduced you to the Silver Fangs in the local sept. You couldn't believe your luck: real combat? That would be really extreme!

Concept: You're the ultimate adrenaline junkie and fighting the battle against the Wyrm is giving you the ultimate fix. You throw yourself into battle and reckless plans with such enthusiasm that other Garou follow you. You usually win, too.

Roleplaying Notes: You're full of enthusiasm for what you do. If there's a dangerous mission to be had, you're the first to volunteer and you have some incredibly dangerous idea for a surprise attack to boot. Your sheer passion for the fight is enough to carry others along with you. However, you can be dismissive of any words of caution or negativity and often ride roughshod over doubters.

Equipment: Casual clothes, an expensive Land Rover full of sport gear, one or two garish lycra outfits and all the weapons you can get your hands one. The more, the better!

Silver Fangs™

Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Breed: Homid
Auspice: Galliard
Camp:

Pack Name:
Pack Totem:
Concept: Extreme Sports Junkie

Attributes

Physical		Social		Mental	
Strength	●●●○○	Charisma	●●●○○	Perception	●●○○○
Dexterity	●●●●○	Manipulation	●●●○○	Intelligence	●●○○○
Stamina	●●●○○	Appearance	●●○○○	Wits	●●●○○

Abilities

Talents		Skills		Knowledges	
Alertness	●●○○○	Animal Ken	○○○○○	Computer	●●○○○
Athletics: Sinuous Jumps	●●●●○	Crafts	○○○○○	Enigmas	○○○○○
Brawl	●●○○○	Drive	●●●○○	Investigation	○○○○○
Dodge	●●●○○	Etiquette	○○○○○	Law	○○○○○
Empathy	●○○○○	Firearms	○○○○○	Linguistics	●○○○○
Expression	○○○○○	Leadership	●●●○○	Medicine	○○○○○
Intimidation	●○○○○	Melee	○○○○○	Occult	○○○○○
Primal-Urge	●●○○○	Performance	○○○○○	Politics	●○○○○
Streetwise	○○○○○	Stealth	●●○○○	Rituals	○○○○○
Subterfuge	○○○○○	Survival	●●○○○	Science	●○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds		Gifts	Gifts
Allies	●○○○○	Inspiration	
Kinfolk	●●○○○	Persuasion	
PureBreed	●●●○○	Falcon's Grasp	
Resources	●●●○○		
	○○○○○		

Renown

Glory ●●○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□
Honor ●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□
Wisdom ○○○○○○○○○○ □□□□

Rage ●●●●○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

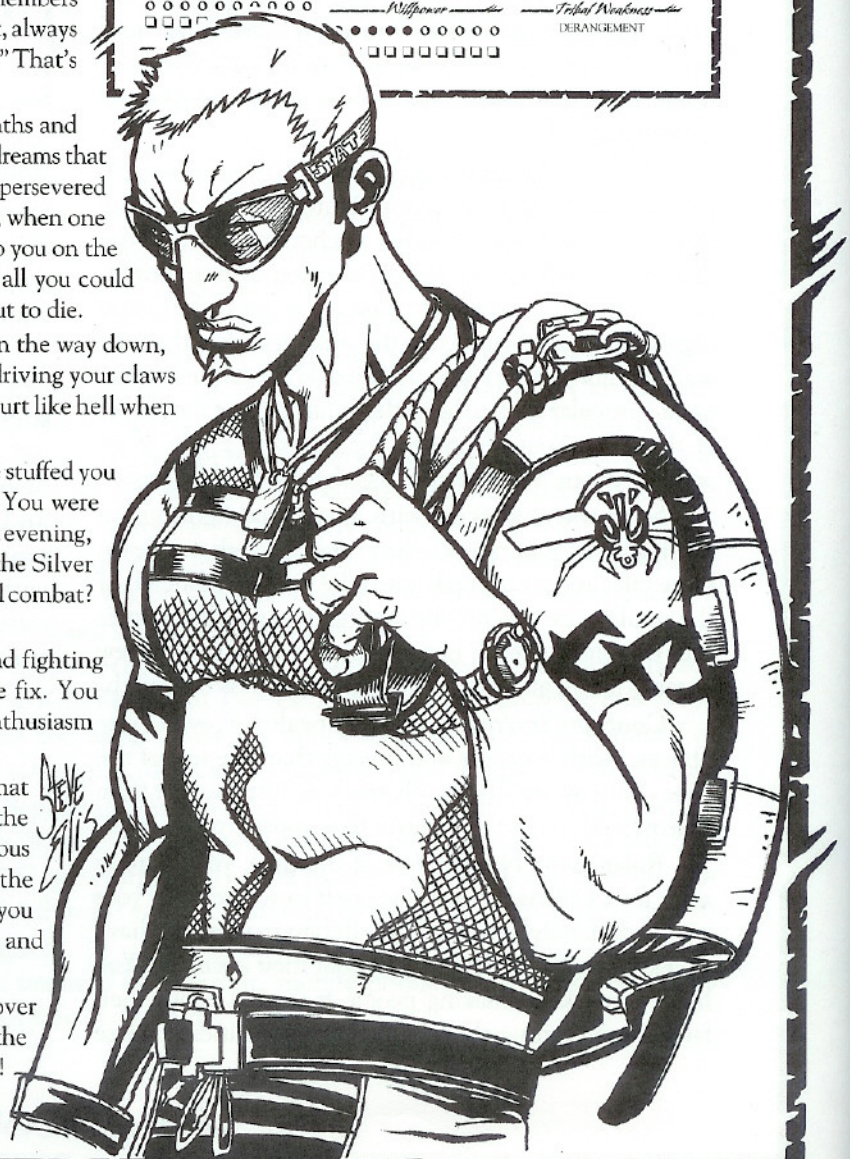
Gnosis ●○○○○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Willpower ●●●●○○○○○○ □□□□□□□□□□

Health

Bruised	☐
Hurt	-1 ☐
Injured	-1 ☐
Wounded	-2 ☐
Mauled	-2 ☐
Crippled	-5 ☐
Incapacitated	☐

Tribal Weakness
DERANGEMENT



Noble Rulers

Yuri and Sophia Tvarivich

The two most famous Silver Fangs of all time lived nearly eight centuries ago in 13th Century Russia. Yuri and Sophia Tvarivich were special from their birth. It is not often that twins are born to a werewolf. It's even more unusual for both of them to undergo their First Change. The twins lived up to the promise of their auspicious birth and the two Ahroun won great renown in battle throughout their youth. The full tale of their exploits during those days takes many nights at a Galliard's feet to tell. In due time Yuri took his rightful place as the leader of Russia's Silver Fangs. His reign ushered in a golden age for the tribe in Russia, one that Fangs still celebrate in song. The land prospered under his rule as his warriors found and destroyed every Wyrm beast that dared show its face (or nearest equivalent) in his lands. Often the missions to destroy the beasts were led by Sophia herself. When she wasn't fighting for her brother, she was by his side, advising and supporting. Both of the twins took several Kinfolk lovers to ensure that their bloodline would survive. Even Sophia's children bore the Tvarivich name, such was the esteem for the twins.

However, it wasn't the manner of the twins' lives that earned them their fame, it was the manner of their death. The Wyrm, maddened by its repeated defeats at the hands of the Russian Fangs, sent one of its mightiest servants against them: the Zmei Sharkala the Cruel. When news of its depredations and the failure of several packs to defeat it reached the ears of Yuri and Sophia, Yuri stepped down from the throne, put down his crown and called for a pack to follow him. Garou from several tribes rallied to his call, and the new pack set off in search of the Wyrm-dragon. Their adventures were many, but one day they found their quarry. Sophia was rooted to the spot by its baleful gaze, but she was able to pass her brother a Firebird Feather, a legendary fetish handed to her in secret years before by their dying grandfather. Yuri drove the feather into the Wyrm beast, wounding it mortally. In its death throes, though, it fastened its jaws on Sophia, killing her outright. Yuri's fury and misery were a potent combination, and he hacked Sharkala to pieces, suffering mortal wounds himself as he did so. Then he ordered that a pyre be built, on which Sophia and the fallen dragon would be cremated. As the flames leapt high, he threw himself into their embrace. Their mingled ashes were spread from one end of Russia to another in memory of their noble sacrifice.

To this day the twins are revered for the three great stages of their lives: their fighting days, leading packs into battle; their ruling days, watching over Russia; and their days of sacrifice, giving up everything, including their lives, in service to Gaia. No Silver Fang since has quite matched their lives. With the Apocalypse believed to be close at hand, it grows increasingly unlikely that any Silver Fang ever will.

Isaiah Morningkill

In the last few years, a near forgotten figure from recent Silver Fang history has become one of the most celebrated werewolves in the history of House Wyrmfoe, not least for his parallels with his great-great-grandson Albrecht's own life. The revelation of his tale has at last given the New World Silver Fangs a hero to rival those of the Old World.

A century before Albrecht was banished by Jacob Morningkill, Isaiah was banished from the same protectorate as the result of a disagreement with the sept's Caern Warder and some particularly nasty political maneuverings. Unlike Albrecht he never returned.

Morningkill was respected for his wisdom, his skill with the spirits and his unusual ferocity in battle for a Theurge. None of this was enough to save him from the petty politics of the day. After bidding a sorrowful fare well to his wife, he headed to the frontier and the west. In the Old West, legends were made. Morningkill, a Theurge, was drawn by the terrible disruption that was tearing through the local Penumbra. He, along with a collection of Theurges from other tribes, eventually realized what was causing the problem: a mighty Wyrm spirit called the Storm Eater. It was Morningkill's initiative to contact Theurges in the so-called Pure Tribes and he was instrumental in organizing *all* the tribes, both Pure and Wyrmcomer, against the spirit.

In those days, Morningkill became everything a Silver Fang leader should be: strong, focused, committed to the cause and taciturn to the point of terseness. Sometimes he traveled alone, sometimes with a pack, but when he visited a Sept, its members would be changed by his passage. Morningkill's key attribute, though, was the ability to admit to the mistakes that European tribes had made in the once Pure Lands. When a mighty Silver Fang lord was prepared to admit error first, it came more easily to the other tribes.

In the end, Morningkill sacrificed himself for his tribe, for the West and for Gaia. When it became clear that one member of each tribe would have to die to defeat the Storm Eater, Morningkill knew that he couldn't ask others to make a sacrifice he wasn't prepared to make himself. As the climax of the Rite of Still Skies, Morningkill died alongside 12 other brave Garou from the other tribes.

With Morningkill dead, the willingness of the European tribes to admit their mistakes faded. The story of his sacrifice was entrusted to only a few Galliards and passed from the common knowledge of most Silver Fangs. All that changed with the ascent of his descendent Albrecht to the throne of House Wyrmfoe. The work of the new king and his packmate Evan Heals-The-Past to reconcile the tribes in North America has been bolstered by the tales of heroes like Morningkill who were admitting their mistakes and working for the good of all over a century before.

Queen Tamara Tvarivich

During the long years that Russia and much of the former USSR was separated from the rest of the Garou Nation by Baba Yaga and the Shadow Curtain, one werewolf rose to prominence: Tamara Tvarivich. The strange thing is, nobody really knows that much about her. Oh, the genealogists can tell you that she's a direct bloodline descendent of the Tvarivich twins, Yuri and Sophia, and she has achieved great renown as a Theurge. Most people are aware that Tamara is a member of the Ivory Priesthood.

But in most people's minds, Tamara is measured more by her deeds that by her personality and that's just the way she likes it. To her, it's a compliment, recognition of the fact that she's surrendered her own life and desires to the betterment of the Silver Fangs and the Garou Nation as a whole. She has her regrets: in her youth she was something of an adventurer, seeking out the secrets and lost fetishes that would help the tribe. She knows that the time for that has passed and until a better ruler comes along, it's her duty to keep the tribe working to repair the terrible damage that the Hag and her armies did before the Shadow Curtain fell.

Tamara has successfully won the respect of most of the Old World Silver Fang houses, although she has rubbed some of the other tribes up the wrong way with her old-fashioned assumption of Silver Fang supremacy. This unconscious arrogance has kept the Fangs out of the growing alliance of the tribes masterminded by Margrave Konietzko of the Shadow Lords that is reshaping the Garou Nation in Europe.

If she has made one major misstep in her life, it was her faith in Lord Arkady. That faith, partly born from his incredibly pure breeding, and partly from his bravery in the final days of battle against the Hag's armies. The notorious Wyrm-touched Silver Fang persuaded her that the American Silver Fangs had refused to aid the Russians and had driven him out. He neglected to tell them of his attempt to usurp the North Country Protectorate and his assault on Jonas Albrecht. However, Albrecht finally revealed the truth to Tamara during the Jo'cllath'mattric crisis in East Europe. Arkady stood exposed and, although he later redeemed himself just prior to his death, the revelation of his deceit was the crucial key that opened a dialogue between Tvarivich and the American King.

Now, she's one of the foremost advocates of closer co-operation between the Silver Fang houses and is even grudgingly accepting the idea of Albrecht's claim to leadership of the whole tribe.

The queen is intense and inquisitive, with a casual haughtiness that impresses some and annoys the hell out of others. Still, people put up with her because she's annoyingly right much of the time. She does listen to others and is willing to admit when she's wrong. Once her mind is set on a plan though, it would take Gaia Herself to turn her from it.

Tamara is slim but well muscled, with striking features reminiscent of her ancestor Sophia. She tends to wear her long, black hair coiled and piled on her head, with silver filigree covering it. She favors all white clothing, symbolizing her membership in the Ivory Priesthood, although since she became Queen she has added a cloak with intricate silvery tracery to her wardrobe. The years of war have taught her well, so she is rarely seen without a mace on her hip.

Chases-Street-Demons

The lupus Ahroun Chases-Street-Demons is another Fang whose renown grew boundlessly though his participation in the war against the Hag. In the early days after the Shadow Curtain fell, he was known more for his boasting and self-aggrandizement than for his own skill. Unusually for a lupus he preferred to spend most of his time in Crinos or Homid. Many speculated that this choice was the result of the rather embarrassing incident during his Rite of Passage were he chased down and destroyed a car on a country road because he believed it to be "of the Wyrm". The truth was rather more interesting than that.

After wiping out a small group of Black Spiral Dancers single-handedly near the end of his Rite of Passage, Chases was led by a falcon-spirit to a cave hidden deep in the Ural Mountains. There he found two swords buried deep into the rock. He tried tugging at one, and then the other, both in vain. And then in frustration and growing rage he pulled both at once, and they slipped out easily. These were the legendary Twin Swords of Lothair, a matched pair of fetishes that must be wielded Florentine style: one in each hand. Any attempt to use them any other way is doomed to failure, as the sword buries itself in the ground. Chases preferred wielding the swords to adopting his Lupus form whenever possible, so great was their power.

As the long war against the Hag drew on, Chases' enthusiasm for self-promotion waned. He even started spending time in wolf form when there was no immediate danger of battle. His deeds spoke for themselves and he felt no need to go chasing after trouble. It always seemed to come to him.

When he met Tamara Tvarivich towards the end of the struggle, he found a mind and spirit that complemented his own. The two soon became allies and close friends. One of Tamara's strengths as a strategist was her ability to plan battles that occurred on more than one front simultaneously. When she needed a trusted warrior to take command of the werewolves on the second front, she turned first to Chases. He also served as her liaison to the other tribes in Russia. For some reason that neither of them has been able to fathom, they react better to her message coming from a lupus than from a homid messenger.

After the Shadow Curtain fell and Queen Tvarivich turned her attention to clean-up duty against the remains of the Hag's army, Chases turned his attention to the rest of the world. The great battles in Russia were over for a short while. He sought new battles, and new victories, in other parts of the world. He can be found leading assaults, advising Silver Fang rulers all over the world and occasionally mentoring newly formed packs that show promise.

Image: In Homid form, Chases is tall and imposing, with sharp features and long flowing sliver hair, striped with black. He dresses in plain functional clothing these days, eschewing the flamboyance of his youth. His swords are always at his side. In Lupus form, which he wears more and more frequently, he is a long, lean silver wolf with black ears and a black striped tail. Traces of the fetish swords can be seen along his flanks by moonlight, as his fur there appears to glisten.

Roleplaying Notes: You are strong-willed and direct. You still have a tendency to be brash, but you try to restrain it whenever you can. You talk endlessly about

the battles you fought in Russia, but most of the time you are praising the fallen, not yourself. This often surprises those werewolves who knew you a decade ago and who expect the arrogant, boastful cub they knew then.

Breed: Homid

Auspice: Ahroun

Rank: 5

Physical: Strength 4 (6/8/7/5), Dexterity 5 (5/6/7/7), Stamina 5 (7/8/8/7)

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 4 (2/0/0/0), Appearance 2 (1/0/2/2)

Mental: Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Empathy 1, Intimidation 3, Primal-Urge 4

Skills: Animal Ken 3, Etiquette 2, Leadership 5, Melee 5, Stealth 4, Survival 5

Knowledges: Enigmas 1, Investigation 3, Linguistics 2, Rituals 3

Backgrounds: Kinfolk 3, Allies 4

Rage: 8; **Gnosis:** 8; **Willpower:** 9

Gifts: (1) Falling Touch, Hare's Leap, Razor Claws, Resist Pain, Sense Wyrm; (2) Scent of Sight, Sense Silver, Spirit of the Fray, Talons of Falcon, True Fear; (3) Catfeet, Heart of Fury, Wrath of Gaia; (4) Leshii's Boon, Stoking Fury's Furnace; (5)Luna's Avenger

Rites: Rite of the Opened Caern, Rite of the Fetish

Fetish: The Twin Swords of Lothair (Level 6, Gnosis 8). This pair of twin swords must be wielded Florentine style. If either is used separately, it will bury itself in the ground up to its hilt. The swords cause aggravated damage, store up to 8 Rage within themselves and can act like the Gift: Clap of Thunder if they are crossed in the air above the head of the wielder.

Queen Mary Campbell

On the whole, Mary "Scours-the-Heather" Campbell considers taking on the leadership of House Austere Howl the worst thing she ever did. Of course, she didn't have much choice when her father became the third king to die in as many years. The house was in a bad way already. The Defiler Wyrm had its claws deep into the senior werewolves of the house, who were joining the Silver Spiral with alarming regularity.

Mary, an inexperienced Scottish-born Ahroun with only two years of experience post First Change, did damn well at first. She rallied the loyal nobles against the corrupt ones and set about purging the house of its taint. She was close to succeeding when she found herself under attack from an unexpected source: House Gleaming Eye. The house's obsessive hunt for Wyrm-taint had led to it declaring war on Austere Howl. Eventually, with her house all but destroyed, Mary was forced to flee Edinburgh for Ireland and Silver Tara, greatest caern of the Fianna. There she petitioned aid from Ard Righ Bron Mac Fionn, and was granted it. The Fianna and surviving members of Austere Howl managed to win back the house's Dublin caern.

However, the fae-maddened Ard Righ did not stay true to his promises. Mary was forced to flee Ireland and is now moving through Europe, trying to avoid the Silver Fangs who believe her tainted, while at the same time rallying as many Austere Howl survivors to her cause as she can. Mary, you see, has a theory. She believes that it is no co-incidence that her House was attacked just as the Black Spirals became more active in their home territory. She also thinks it is no coincidence at all that she was driven from the Edinburgh caern after the Spirals attacked several Scottish caerns belonging to the Fianna. She is convinced that a traitor within the senior ranks of Gleaming Eye has sold Austere Howl out and she wants to expose him or her and re-establish her house before the Spirals complete whatever it is they have planned. She's prepared to die trying, too.

Perhaps the Glass Walkers, who have also faced suspicion in Europe, might be able to help. If only she can track down this Genereader woman, or even, if needs must, this Konietzko chap....

Queen Mary was forced to grow up too fast, and so is over-serious and totally focused on her mission to free her house. She has no time for small talk, which makes her a wearing traveling companion but a very efficient leader in exile. She's demonstrated a real proficiency for mimicking new accents as she hides in Europe's cities.

Mary shows her Scots heritage more than her Silver Fang ancestry: she has long, auburn hair that tumbles down her back, and a slightly rounded face with a small nose. She's short and lean and dresses in normal, everyday human clothes at the moment, often hiding her hair under a hat or cap. In her wolf form, she's compact and thin, with streaks of silver in her brown fur.

King Jonas Alfrecht, Bearer of the Silver Crown

Albrecht is not a typical Silver Fang king. He is considered crude —the quintessential "ugly American" — by many of his royal colleagues around the world, although none deny his martial effectiveness in combating the Wyrm. In this sense, they admit, he is a true scion of House Wyrmfoe.

Jonas's grandfather was King Jacob Morningkill, lord of the North Country Protectorate of North America. He was once a highly respected ruler, but devolved into madness, becoming paranoid and obsessed with testing his court for its loyalty. Although Jonas's father was a Kinfolk — Jacob's sons and daughters did not breed true — the Albrecht family was long considered to be one of the more pure of blood, as far as human standards go. They were not, however, traditional nobility, but were instead descended from the wealthy merchant elite of Holland, come to the New World with the Silver Fang tribe.

Jonas, as the sole direct descendant of Jacob to breed true, was naturally considered to be Jacob's heir. As Jacob's madness took its toll, he mistook Jonas's youthful glory-seeking actions for veiled threats against his throne. He banished Jonas from his kingdom on the charge of insubordination and treachery. Albrecht, too immature to understand just what had happened, became embittered and angry at everything Silver Fang — the tribe's customs, people and legends. He retreated to New York City, where Mother Larissa and her Central Park Bone Gnawers gave him hospitality. He forthwith proceeded to become a drunk, spurning his duty to fight the Wyrm.

He had a number of run-ins with other Garou, many of them violent, for his self-destructive urge inevitably caused him to insult them in one way or another. The New York Garou still talk about the knockdown, drag-out fight between him and Mari Cabrah, a Black Fury who despised his condescending attitude. They had a number of follow-up matches, ambushing one another now and then, but none of them decisive.

He then stumbled across a boy undergoing his First Change, and was thus drawn into the destiny of Evan Heals-the-Past, a Wendigo who didn't look very Native American — his Kinfolk bloodline was far removed from its original source. The minions of the Wyrm sensed that Evan was fated to atone for the bitter anger between the Wendigo and the European tribes, and so sought to kill him. Albrecht was Evan's only defence. Forced into the role of defender and mentor, Albrecht rediscovered his core of honor, and overcame his self-destructive habits with the help of Falcon, totem of his tribe.

In doing so, he had to call upon Mari Cabrah for help, and so helped to forge his unlikely pack. Although he and Mari still verbally fence with one another, their banter hides a deep affection — not romantic, as some reprobate Ragabash have opined, but pack-oriented. For Garou, there are few bonds as tight as those between packmates.

The *Lay of the Silver Crown* tells the story of how Albrecht became king. Jacob was slain by Black Spiral Dancers upon his very throne, and his dying command was for Albrecht to return. But since his exile, a Garou of the purest breeding had joined the caern: Lord Arkady, from Russia. He made a claim for the throne, one which Albrecht, long disgraced by exile, could not overcome. It resulted in a challenge combat, with Arkady the victor. Albrecht was content to let the story end there until evidence of Arkady's treachery and Wyrm-taint surfaced. His only means to dethrone Arkady was to search for the Silver Crown, the ancient relic of true Silver Fang kings.

He finally won the crown and deposed Arkady before his official coronation. In an act of mercy he since

regretted, he spared Arkady's life and exiled him back to Russia. This eventually proved wise, as Arkady helped to free Russia from its Wyrm curse and finally sacrificed himself for the greater good of Gaia by assaulting a great Wyrm beast called Jo'clatth'mattric. Although Albrecht still can't stand the guy, even he gives him reluctant kudos for finally redeeming himself.

Since gaining the Silver Crown and his ancestral kingship, Albrecht has waged war against a shadowy organization called the Seventh Generation, one of the most subtle of the Wyrm's plots to corrupt the world. He has rooted out its agents and slain them whenever they can be tracked and hunted.

He also joined in the continent-spanning fight against Jo'clatth'mattric, eventually allying with Margrave Konietzko, a European Shadow Lord whom many Garou see as the Silver Fang's chief rival for power.

Now, Albrecht journeys to Russia, the Mother Country of the Silver Fangs, to meet for the first time his long-sundered tribemates, in an attempt to heal the rifts between Silver Fang houses and unite the tribe for the coming Apocalypse.

There is a prophecy whispered among the tribes that the Black Spiral Dancers will kill Albrecht when the Apocalypse finally arrives, for he is believed to be the "last Gaian king" spoken of in the prophecy of a mad oracle. Albrecht, of course, discounts the legend, although his packmates continue to worry about it.

Image: On his best days, Albrecht is the model of the modern Silver Fang — he wears his silver hair in a ponytail, his eyes are sharp and clear, and he can command respect regardless of whether he's wearing Garou regalia or tattered jeans and trenchcoat. On his worst days, he looks like ten miles of bad road, every inch the scarred, scruffy veteran of a thousand fights and a long exile.

Roleplaying Notes: It was never your ambition to be king, but you never fell so far from grace that you would think of defying Falcon's wishes. It's a pain in the ass having so many people bowing and scraping in front of you — thank Gaia that your packmates are willing to keep you nice and humble. Still, as long as you've got the job, you might as well make some good come out of it. For one thing, you're doing your best to make sure that the rest of your tribe pays some proper respect to the other tribes — something you learned back when you were closer to the Bone Gnawers than to the Fangs. It makes them grit their teeth, and you know you're going to get challenged for it hard someday, but nothing worth doing is ever easy, right?

Breed: Homid

Auspice: Ahroun

Rank: 6

Physical: Strength 4 (6/8/7/5), Dexterity 4 (4/5/6/6), Stamina 4 (6/7/7/6)

Social: Charisma 4, Manipulation 2 (1/0/0/0), Appearance 3 (2/0/3/3)

Mental: Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Talents: Alertness 3, Athletics 4, Brawl 5, Dodge 4, Empathy 1, Expression 2, Intimidation 3, Primal-Urge 4, Streetwise 2

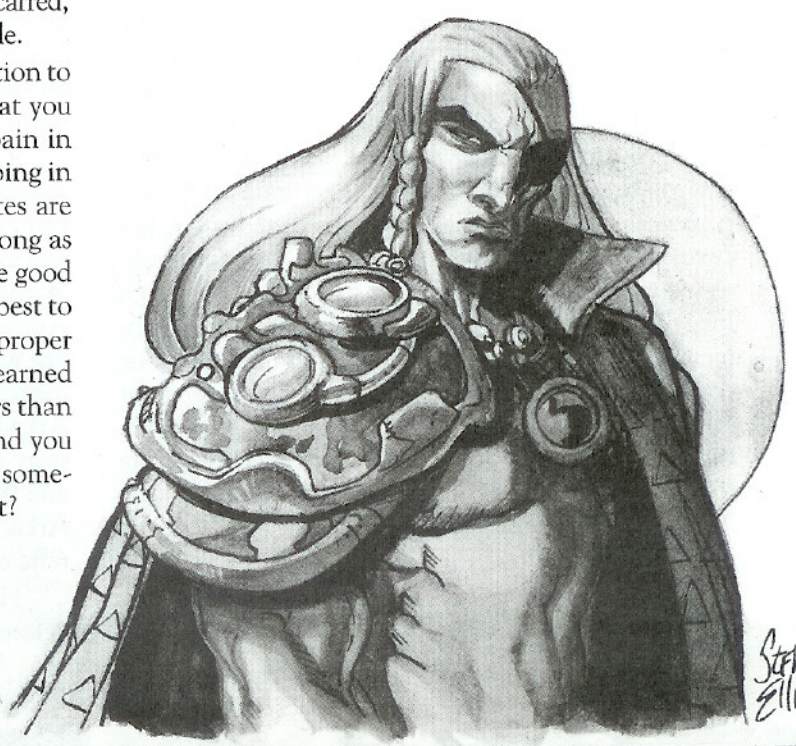
Skills: Animal Ken 1, Crafts 1, Drive 3, Etiquette 2, Firearms 2, Leadership 5, Melee 5, Stealth 4, Survival 3

Knowledges: Enigmas 2, Investigation 3, Law 2, Medicine 2, Occult 2, Politics 3, Rituals 3

Backgrounds: Allies 5, Ancestors 1, Contacts 4, Kinfolk 2, Pure Breed 4, Resources 1/4 (Albrecht has only a little money of his own, but can draw on quite a lot of money by pulling rank)

Rage: 8; **Gnosis:** 5; **Willpower:** 10

Gifts: (1) Eye of the Falcon, Falling Touch, Lambent Flame, Razor Claws, Resist Pain, Sense Wyrm, Smell of Man; (2) Eagle's Beak, Luna's Armor, Spirit of the Fray, Talons of Falcon, True Fear; (3) Silver Claws, Wrath of Gaia; (4) Stoking Fury's Furnace; (5) Luna's Avenger, The Secret of Gaia; (6) One on One (see **Book of Auspices**)

Rites: Gathering for the Departed, Moot Rite, Rite of the Honorable Oath, Rite of the Loyal Pack, Rite of the Opened Caern, Rite of Talisman Dedication, Rite of Wounding

Fetish: Solemn Lord, a grand klaive that boasts the secondary power of heroic endurance. By spending two Gnosis points to invoke this power, Albrecht gains an additional three soak dice against all attacks save silver for the duration of the scene.